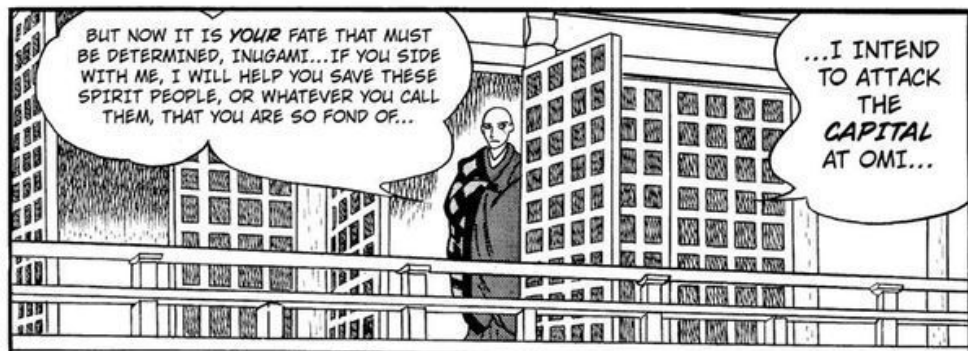






IT
INCREAS-
INGLY
APPEARS
...

...THAT MY
FATE IS
BEING
DETERMINED
BY YOU...



BUT NOW IT IS *YOUR* FATE THAT MUST
BE DETERMINED, INUGAMI...IF YOU SIDE
WITH ME, I WILL HELP YOU SAVE THESE
SPIRIT PEOPLE, OR WHATEVER YOU CALL
THEM, THAT YOU ARE SO FOND OF...

...I INTEND
TO ATTACK
THE
CAPITAL
AT OMI...



NOTHING
COULD
MAKE ME
HAPPIER,
SIR!



COME UP
HERE,
INUGAMI
...

...SHARE A
FLASK OF
SAKE WITH
ME!!



IT IS OUR
DESTINY
TO WORK
TOGETHER...

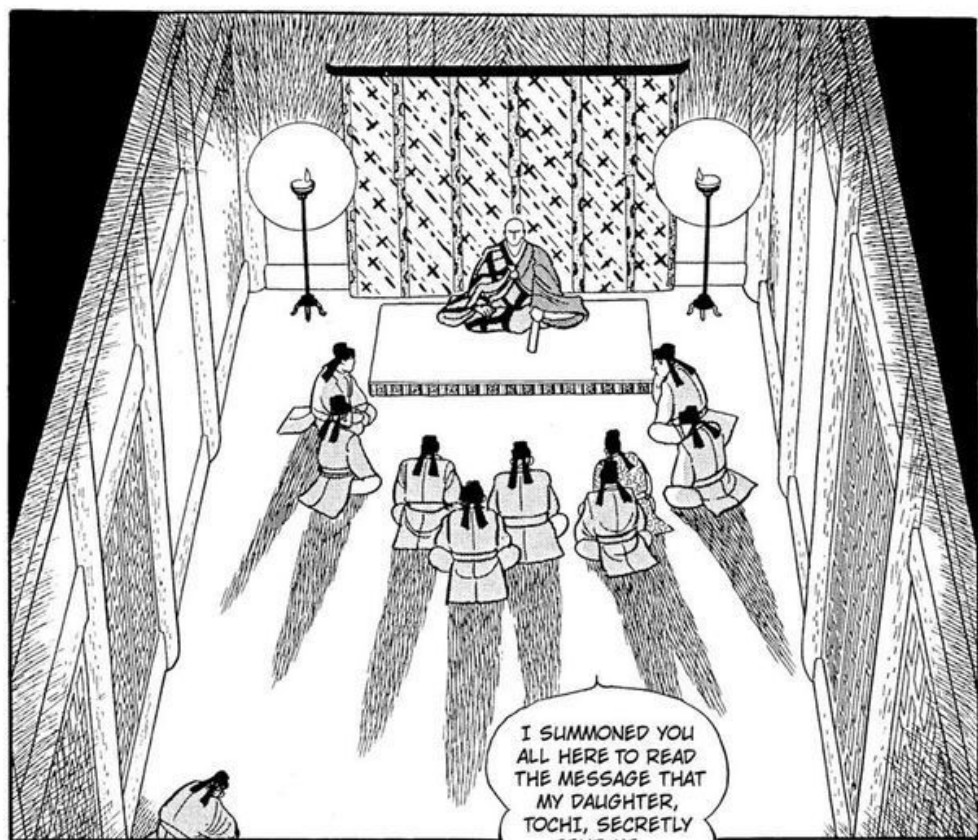


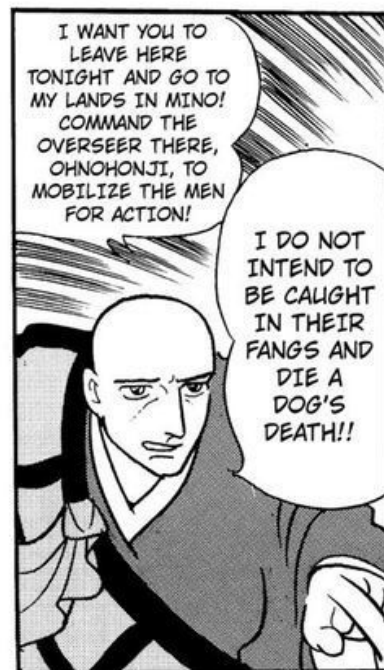
JOIN ME...LET US
DRINK AND EAT
TOGETHER THIS
EVENING, IN
HONOR OF OUR
GOOD FORTUNE...

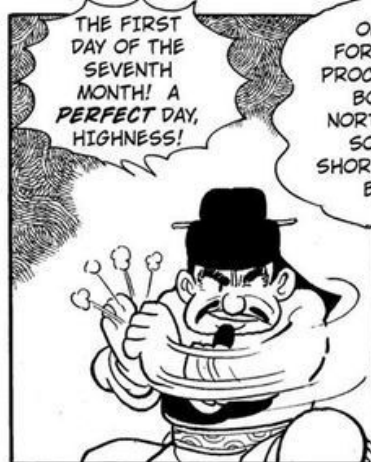






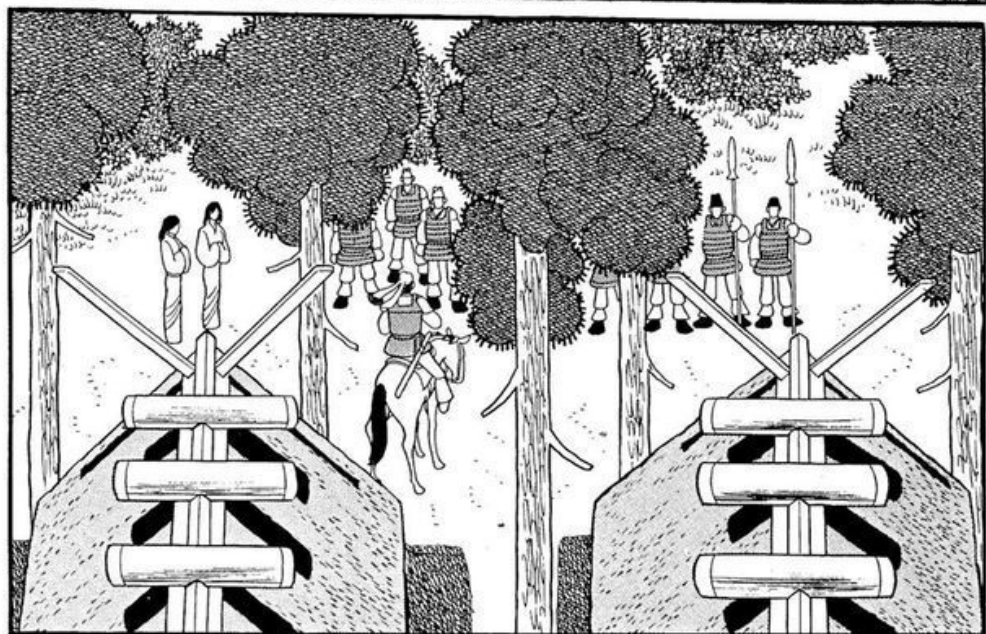
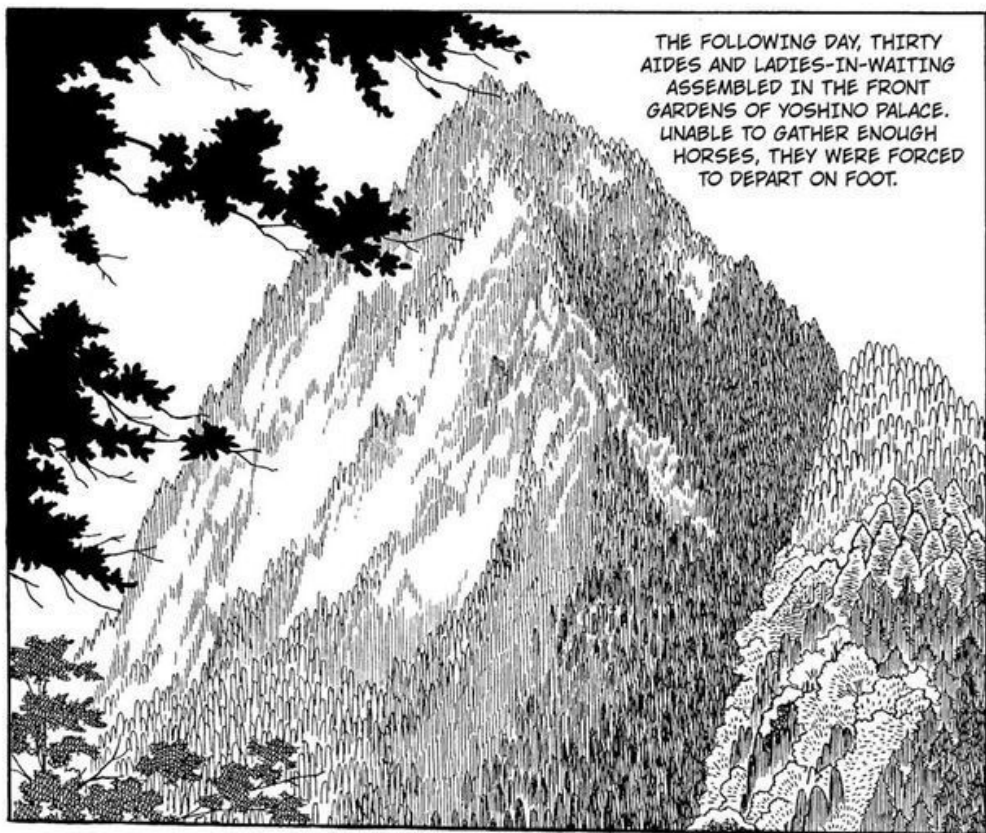


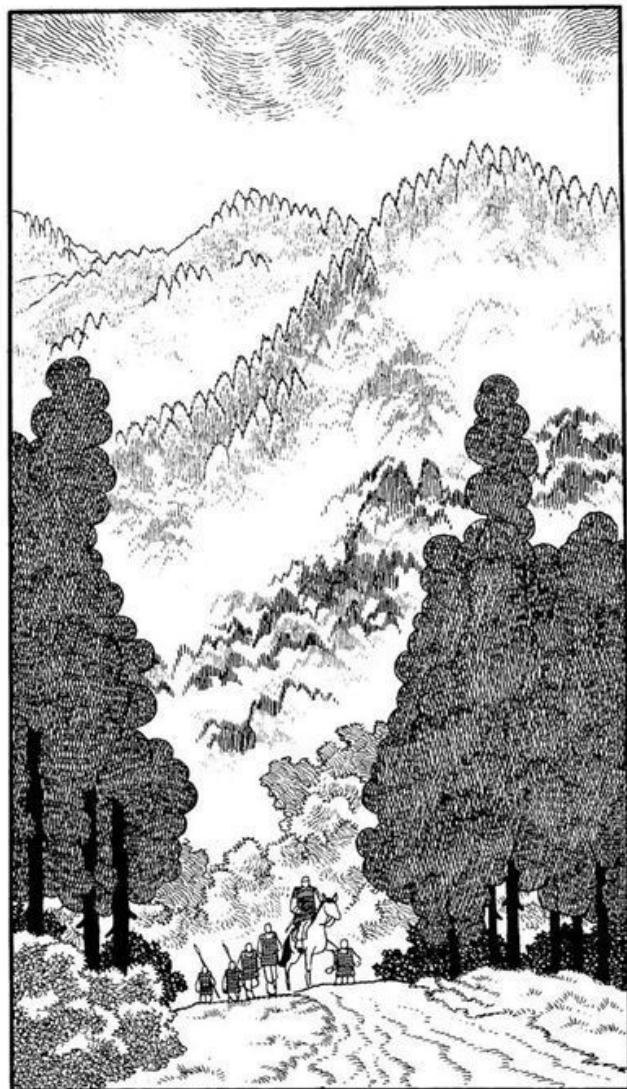


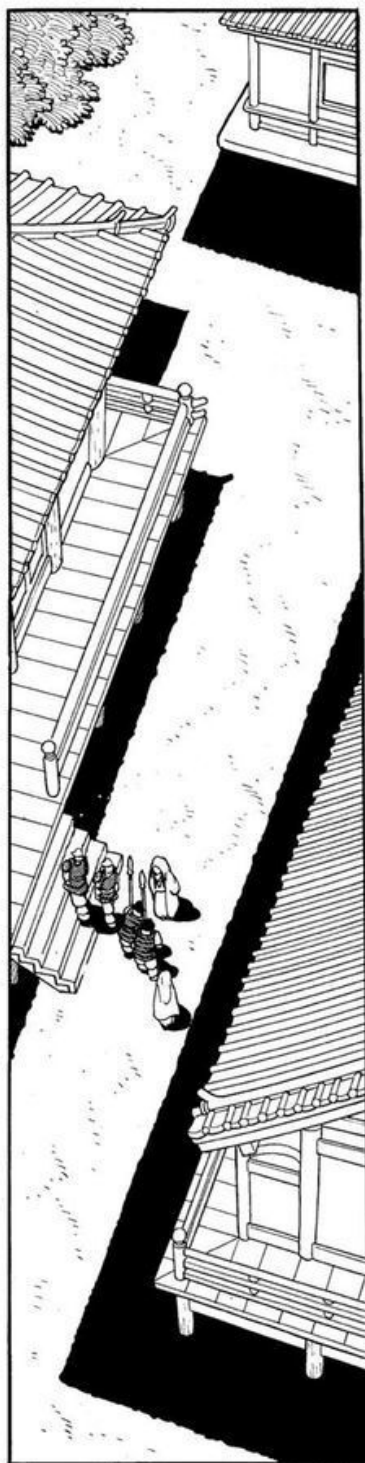


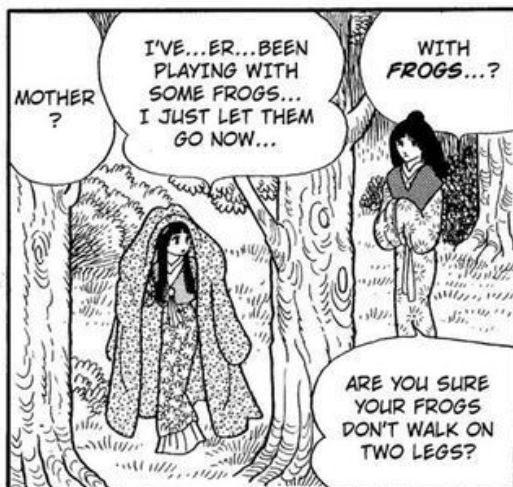
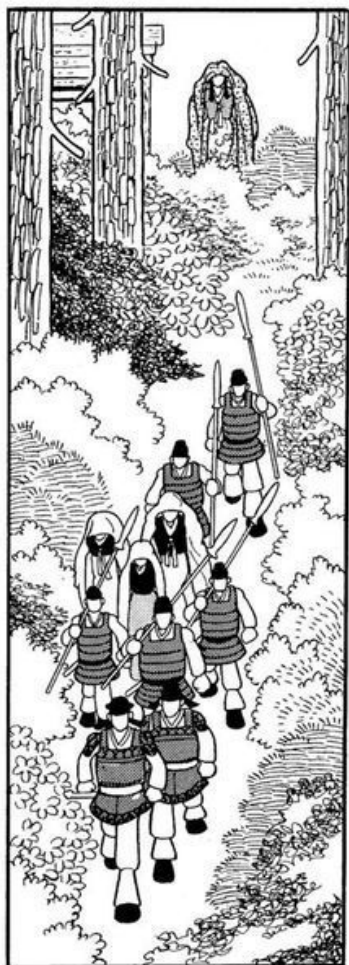


THE FOLLOWING DAY, THIRTY
AIDES AND LADIES-IN-WAITING
ASSEMBLED IN THE FRONT
GARDENS OF YOSHINO PALACE.
UNABLE TO GATHER ENOUGH
HORSES, THEY WERE FORCED
TO DEPART ON FOOT.

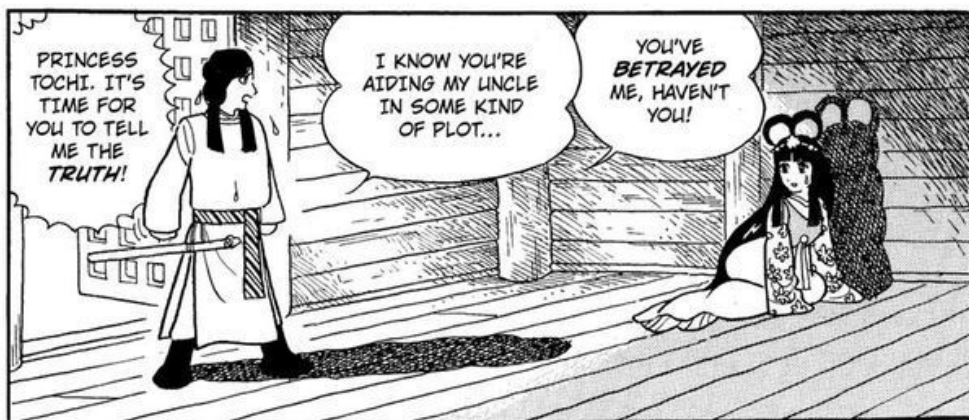


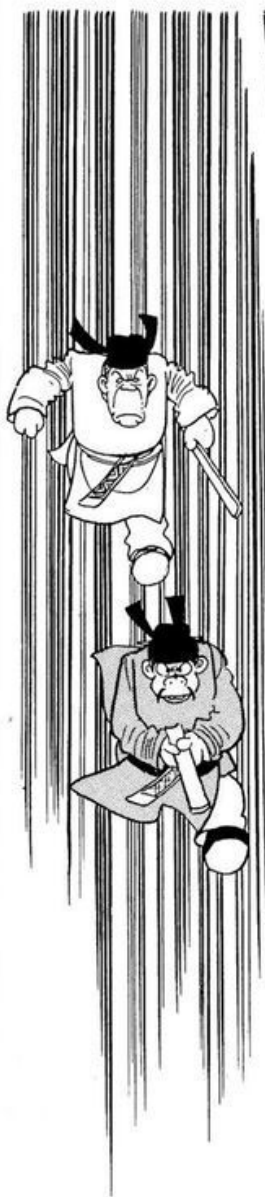


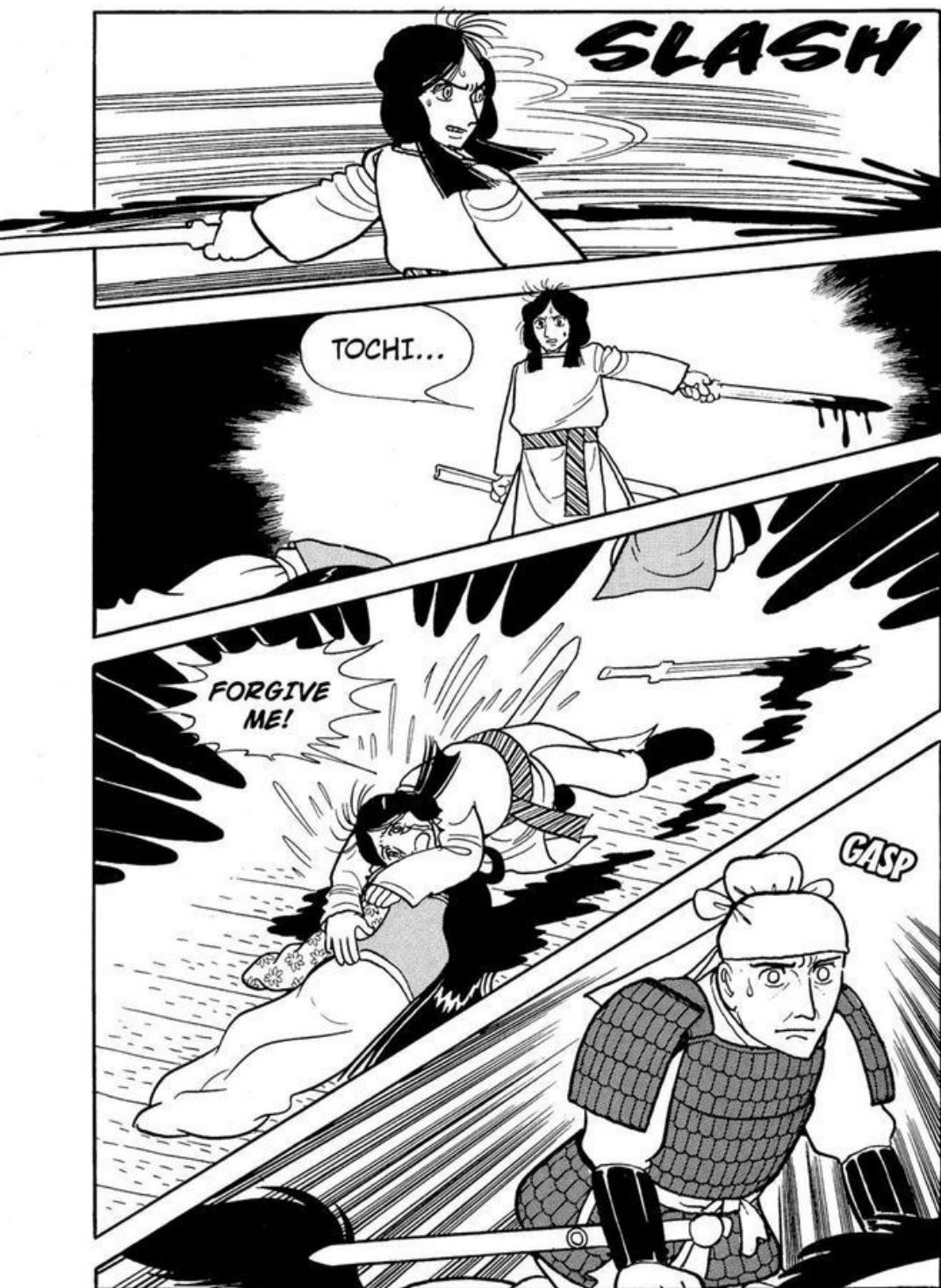


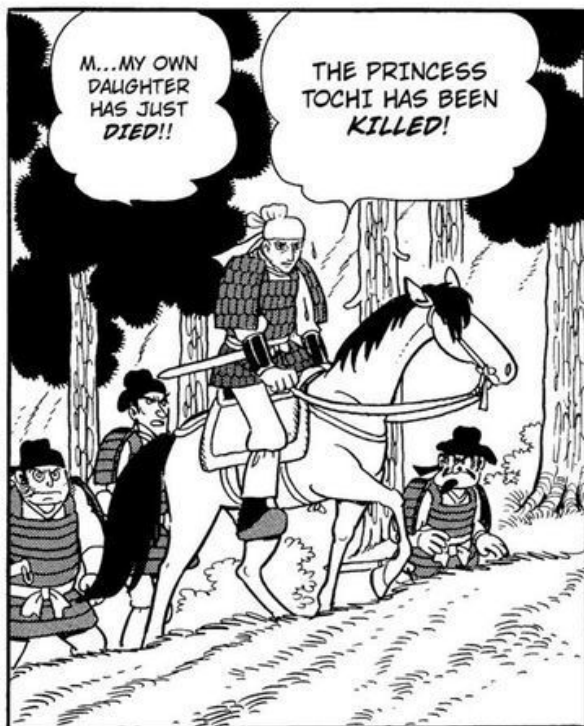
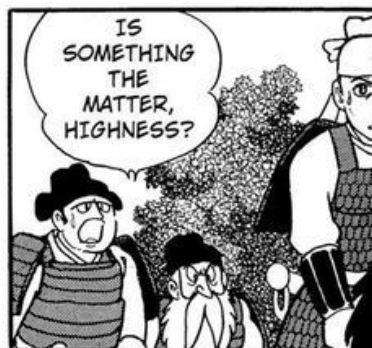








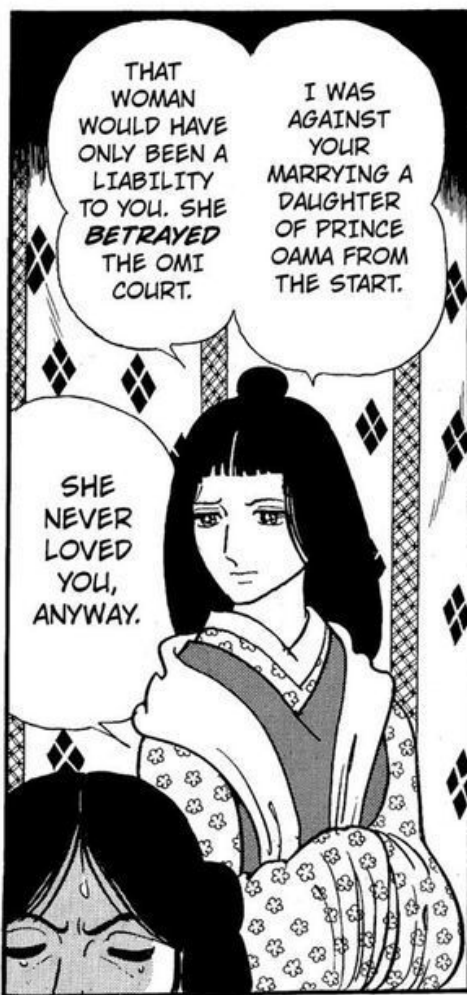






PRINCE OTOMO,
YOU CAN'T KEEP
TORTURING
YOURSELF OVER
THIS. YOU HAD
NO CHOICE BUT
TO KILL HER.

NOW,
WIPE YOUR
TEARS AND
ACT LIKE
A MAN...



THAT
WOMAN
WOULD HAVE
ONLY BEEN A
LIABILITY
TO YOU. SHE
BETRAYED
THE OMI
COURT.

I WAS
AGAINST
YOUR
MARRYING A
DAUGHTER
OF PRINCE
OAMA FROM
THE START.

SHE
NEVER
LOVED
YOU,
ANYWAY.



I'VE HEARD
ENOUGH,
MOTHER!

I DON'T NEED
A LECTURE
FROM YOU!
I WAS
BETROTHED
TO HER!



CAN'T YOU
THINK HOW
MUCH GRIEF
THIS CAUSES
ME, YOUR
BIRTH
MOTHER?!



LISTEN. ALL OF THE
IMPORTANT MINISTERS,
INCLUDING SOGA NO OMI
HATAYASU, ARE STARTING TO
DEBATE HOW BEST TO BRING
PRINCE OAMA TO HEEL...
**YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO
MAKE THE FINAL DECISION.**



MOTHER,
I HAVE NO
INTENTION
OF FIGHTING
MY UNCLE.

HE'S MY
OWN
**FLESH
AND
BLOOD,**
AFTER
ALL!



WHAT ARE
YOU SAYING,
MY SON?
**YOU'VE GOT
TO BE THE
ONE TO
STRIKE FIRST,
OR HE'S
GOING TO
KILL YOU!**



SOMETHING
DOESN'T
MAKE SENSE
HERE,
MOTHER.
JUST WHO
IS BEHIND
ALL OF THIS,
ANYWAY?

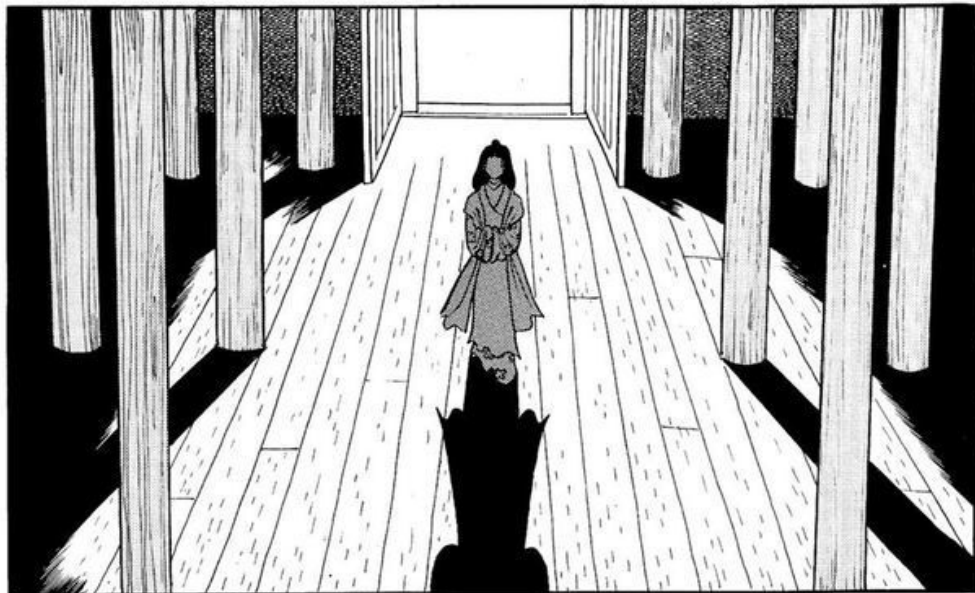


GET A GRIP ON
YOURSELF, SON!
**YOU'RE THE
EMPEROR
OF YAMATO!
GO OUT
AND TAKE
COMMAND!**

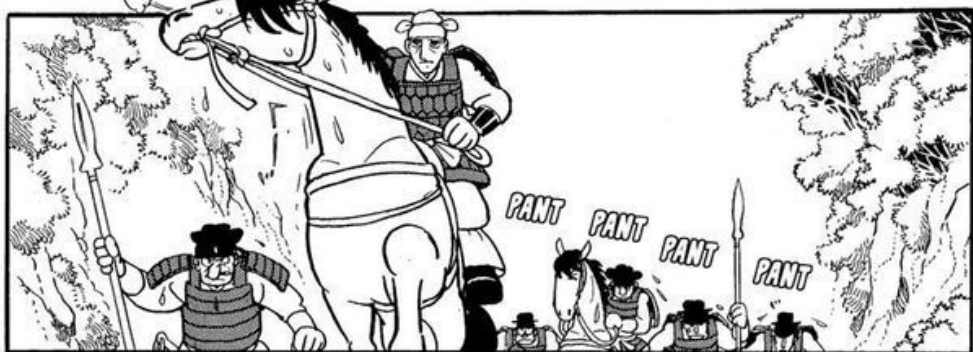
**NO! I WON'T
TAKE PART
IN ANY
BLOODBLATH!
NOT WITH
MY UNCLE!**

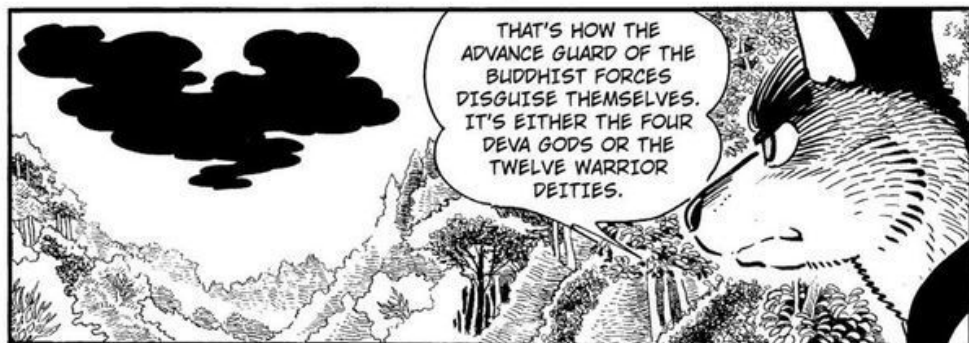


I'M NOT A
FOOL, MOTHER!
I KNOW
SOMEONE MUST
BE PULLING
STRINGS
BEHIND MY
BACK. THAT'S
WHY THINGS
ARE TURNING
OUT THE WAY
THEY ARE!

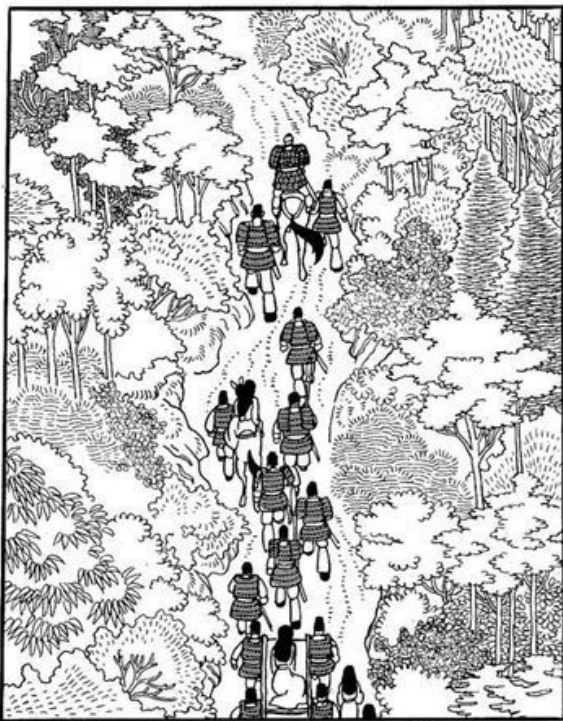








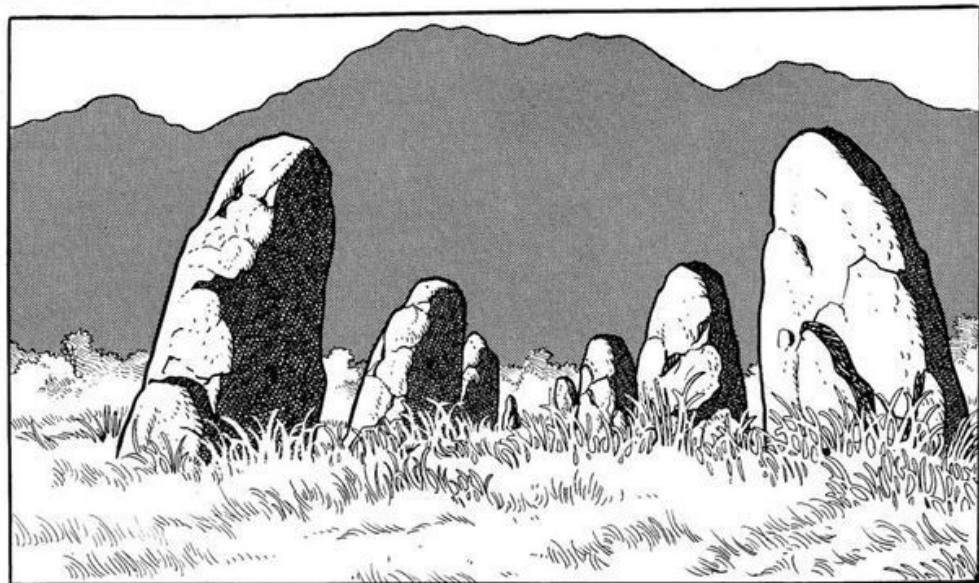


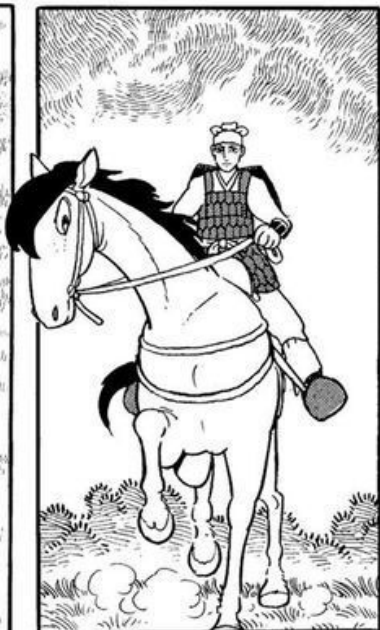
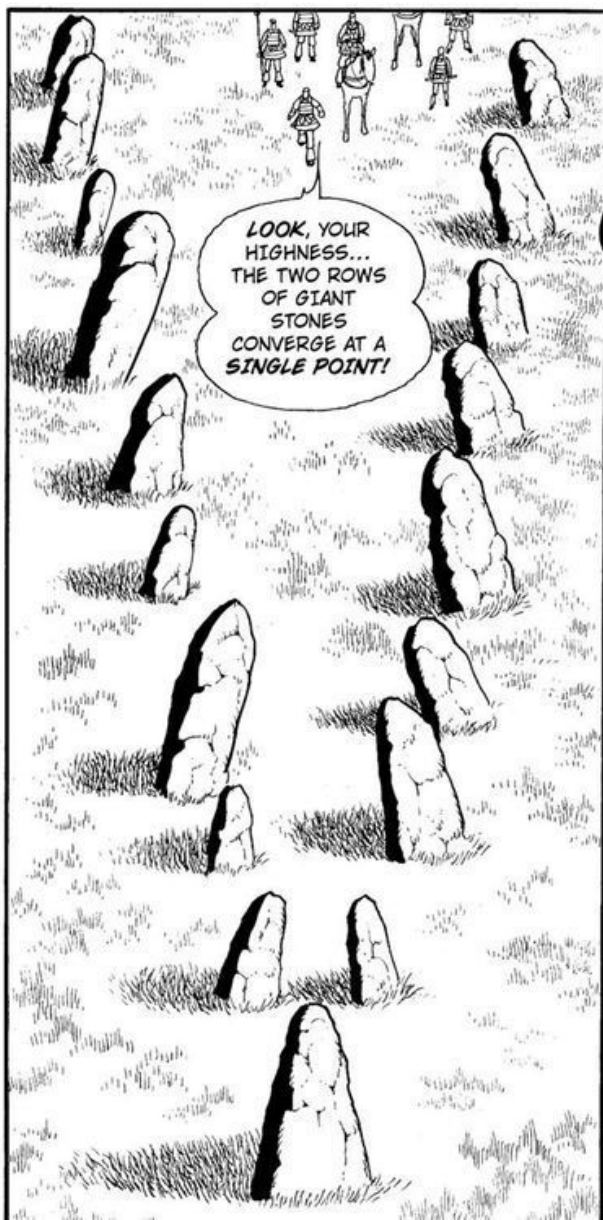


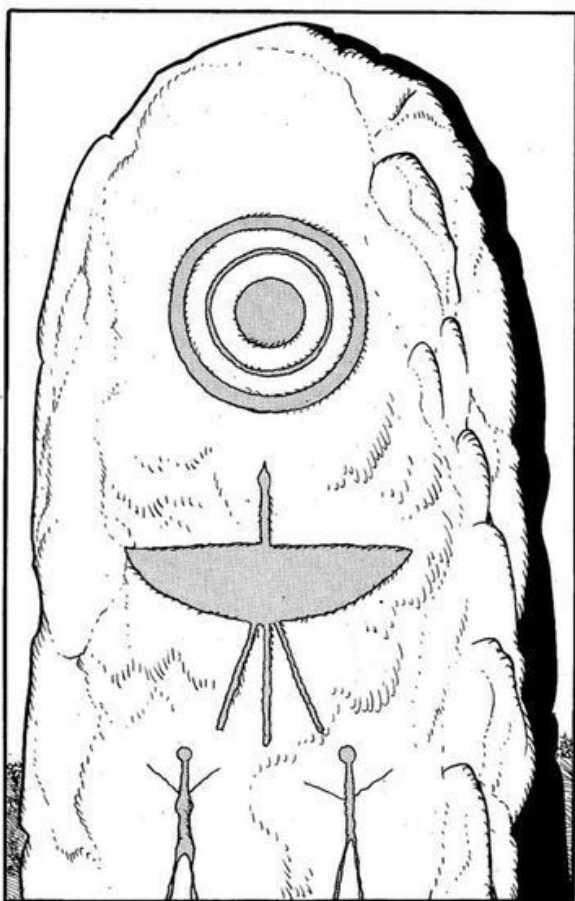
ACCORDING
TO THE
NIHON SHOKI,
AN ANCIENT
HISTORY
OF JAPAN,
"HUGE BLACK
CLOUDS
ENVELOPED
YOKOGAWA..."

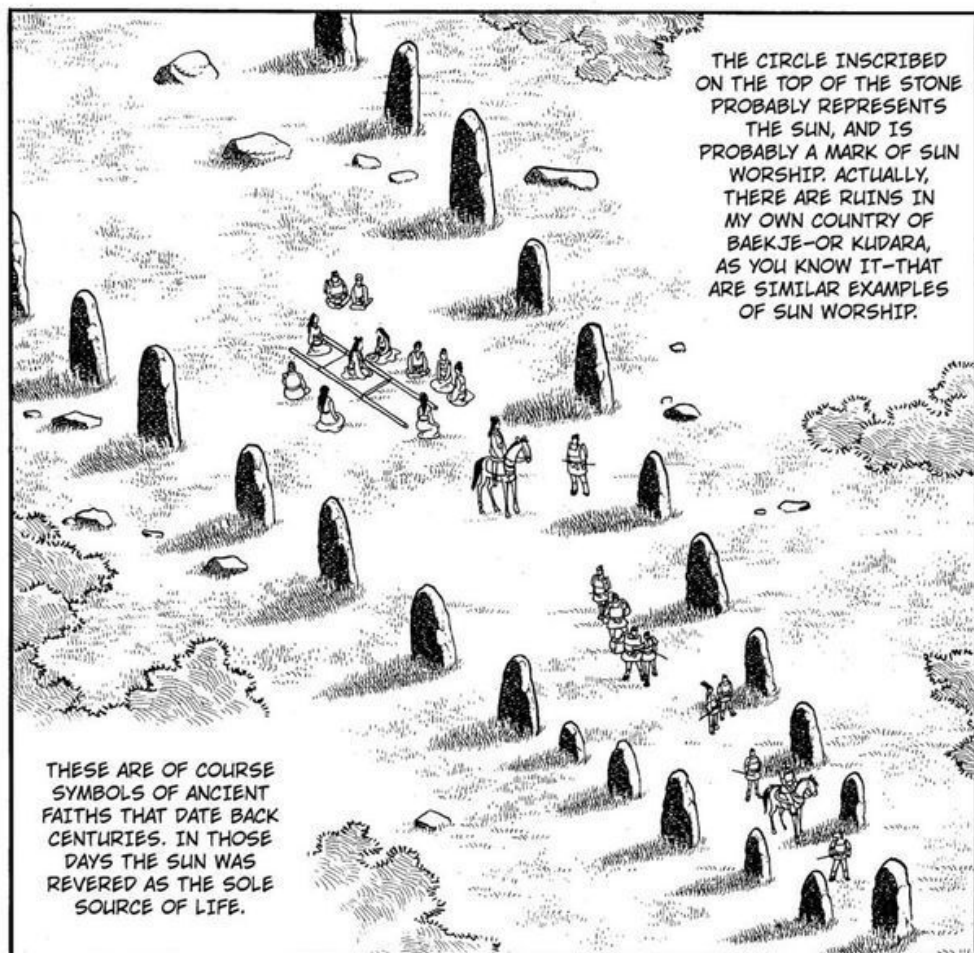
"...AND BEING
WIDER THAN WIDE
AND EXTENDING
AS HIGH AS
HEAVEN, THEY
INSTILLED AWE
IN EVEN THE
EMPEROR."





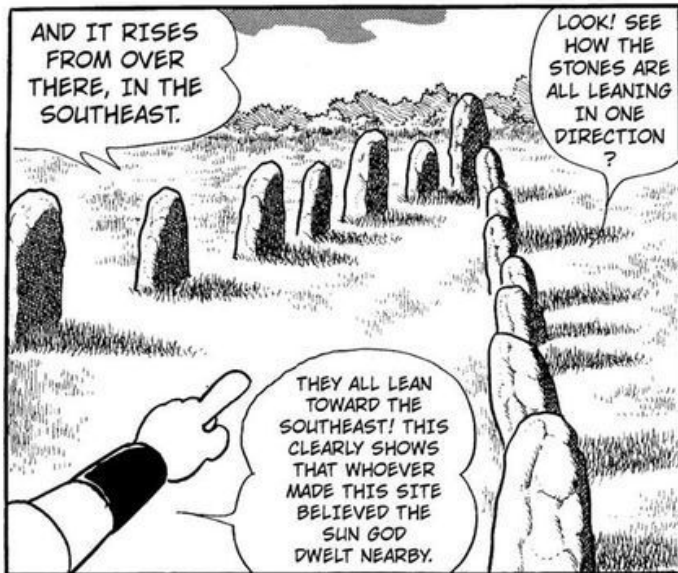








*ON THE SEA OF JAPAN.









RUMBLE



THUNDER

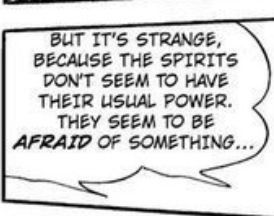
IF THIS KEEPS
UP, WE WON'T
BE ABLE TO
MOVE! HOW
LONG'S IT
GOING TO
LAST?!



THEY'RE
TRYING TO
FORCE US BACK
TO YOSHINO...



BUT IT'S STRANGE,
BECAUSE THE SPIRITS
DON'T SEEM TO HAVE
THEIR USUAL POWER.
THEY SEEM TO BE
AFRAID OF SOMETHING...



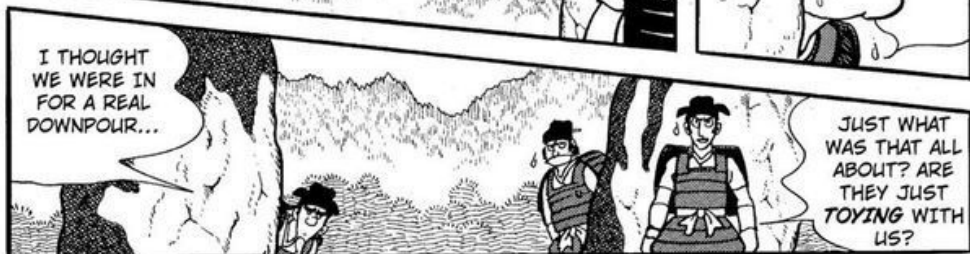
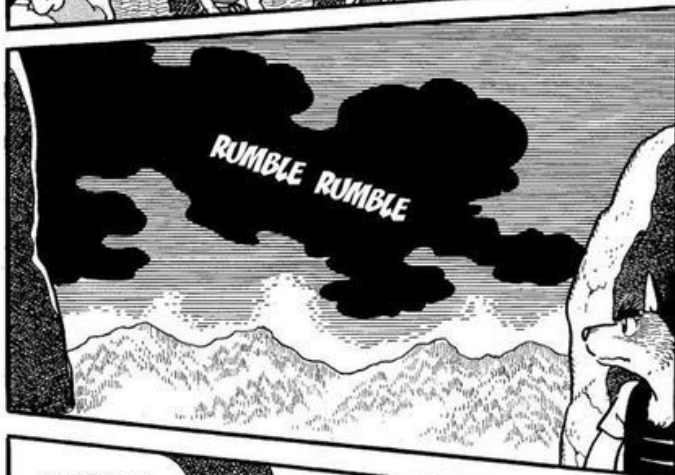
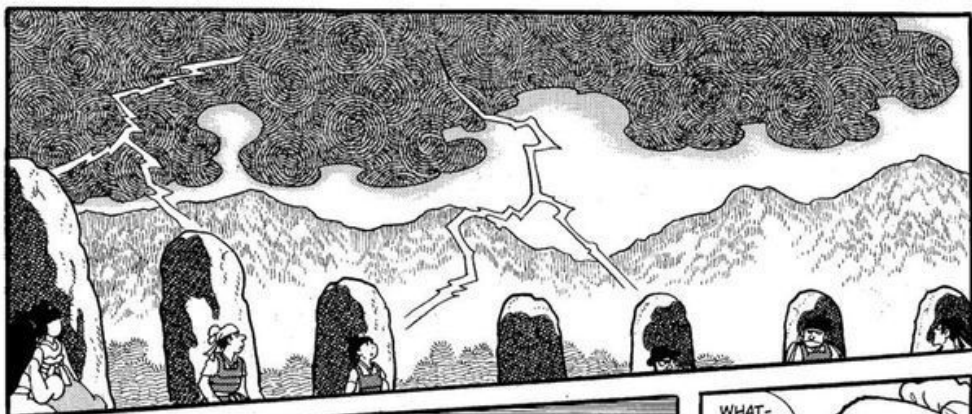
AFRAID?
WHAT'VE
THEY GOT
TO BE
AFRAID
OF?



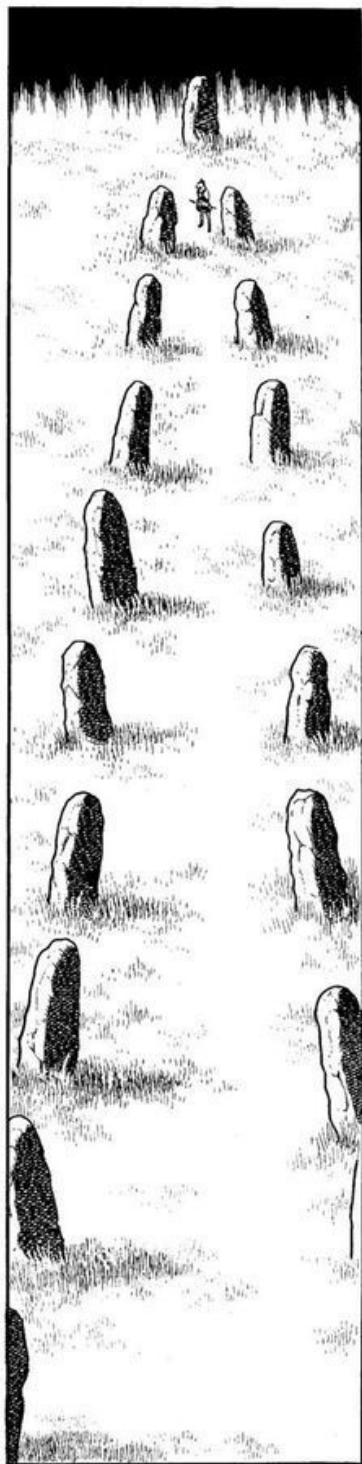
I'M
NOT
SURE...



MAYBE
IT'S
BECAUSE
THEY
THINK
THIS IS
SACRED
GROUND.

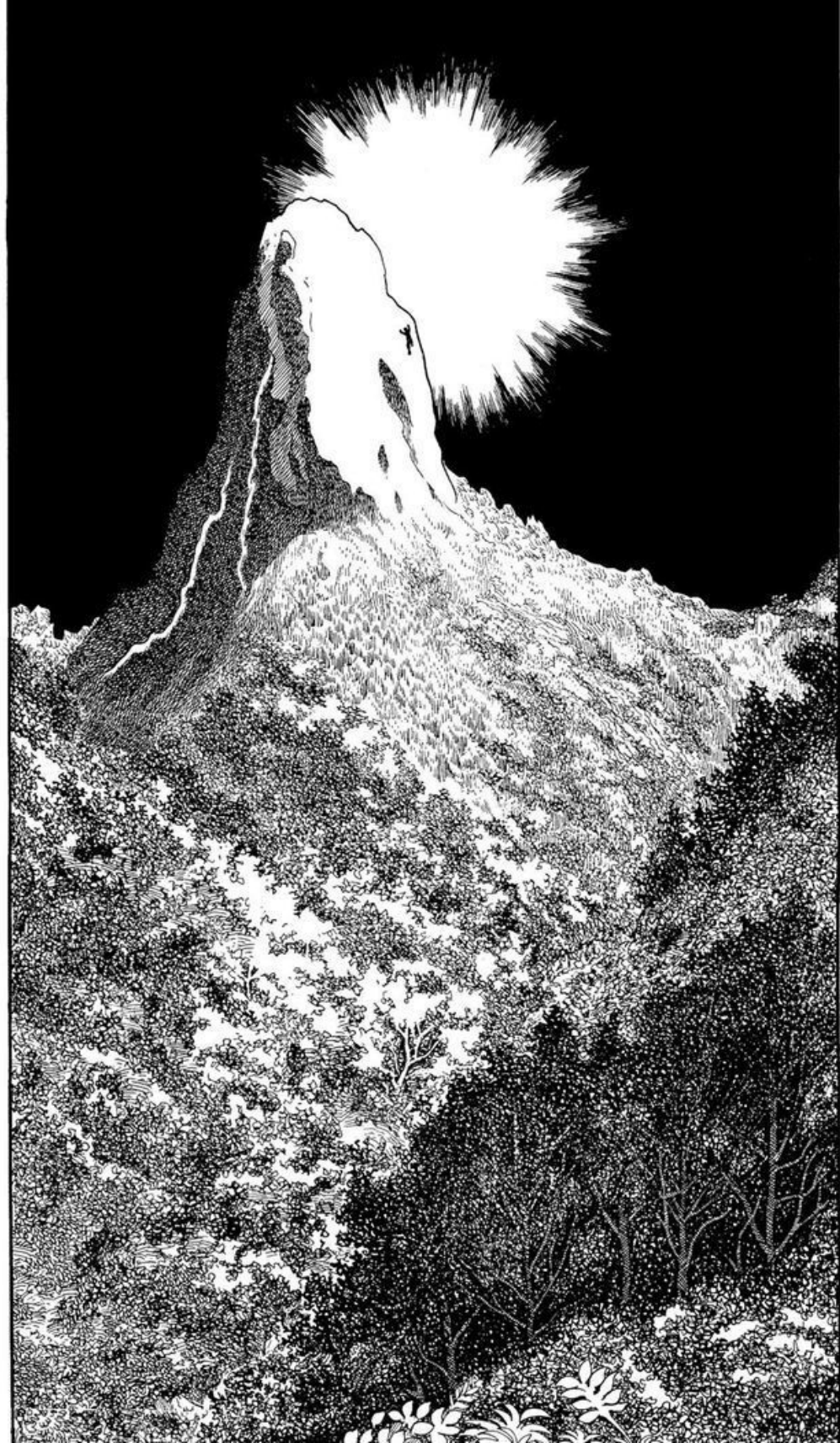


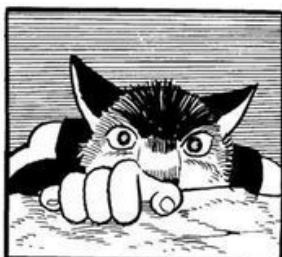
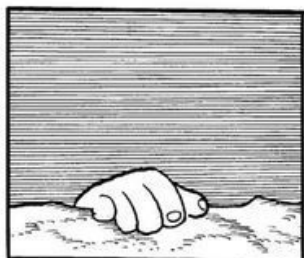












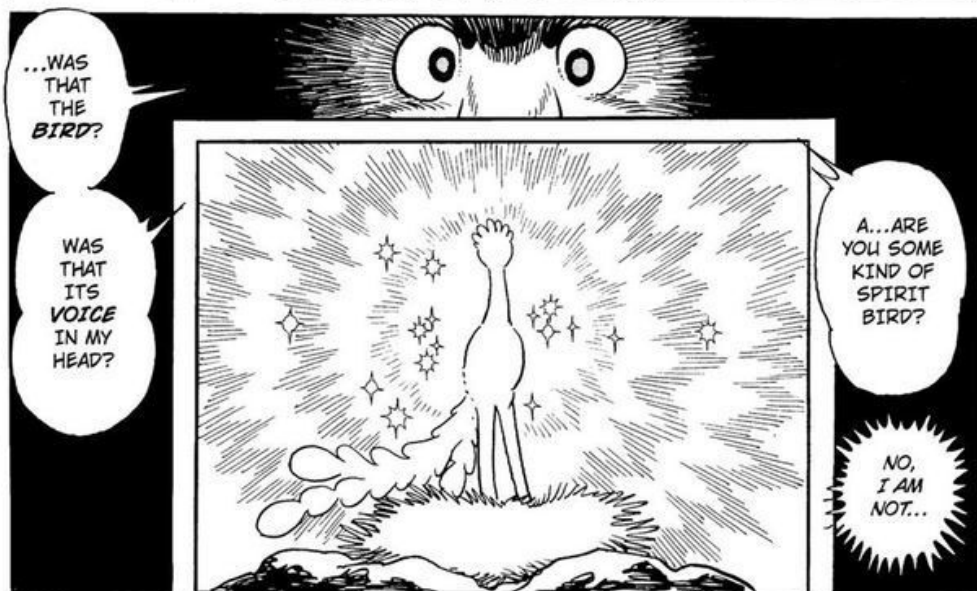
IT
LOOKS
LIKE A
BIRD...

...IT'S
UNBELIEVABLY
BRIGHT...
IT SHINES...
LIKE THE SUN...

NO...
WAIT.
IT'S NOT A
BIRD...

...MAYBE I'M
LOOKING AT
SOMETHING
I'M NOT
MEANT TO
SEE...

MAYBE I
SHOULDN'T
HAVE EVEN
COME HERE...



WHAT IS
IT THAT YOU
WISH?

DID YOU
COME TO
DRINK MY
BLOOD?

DRINK
YOUR
BLOOD,
YOU
SAY?

BLOOD?!

WHAT DO
YOU MEAN?

IF YOU
DRINK MY
BLOOD,
YOUR
PHYSICAL
FORM WILL
LIVE
FOREVER...

THAT'S
WHY YOU
CAME
HERE,
RIGHT?

AH!
NOW I
REMEMBER!

THE CHIEF
OF THE
SPIRIT PEOPLE
DID SAY
SOMETHING
ABOUT ME
SEARCHING
FOR THE BLOOD
OF A BIRD OF
FIRE...

DON'T YOU
WANT MY
BLOOD?

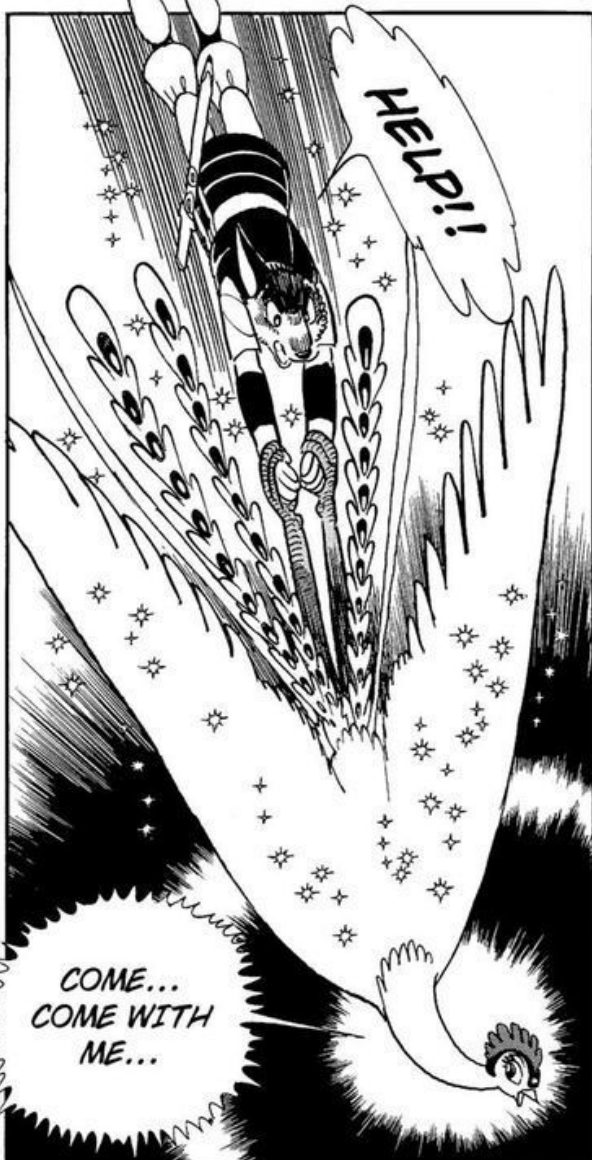
I DON'T
NEED
ANYTHING
LIKE
THAT.

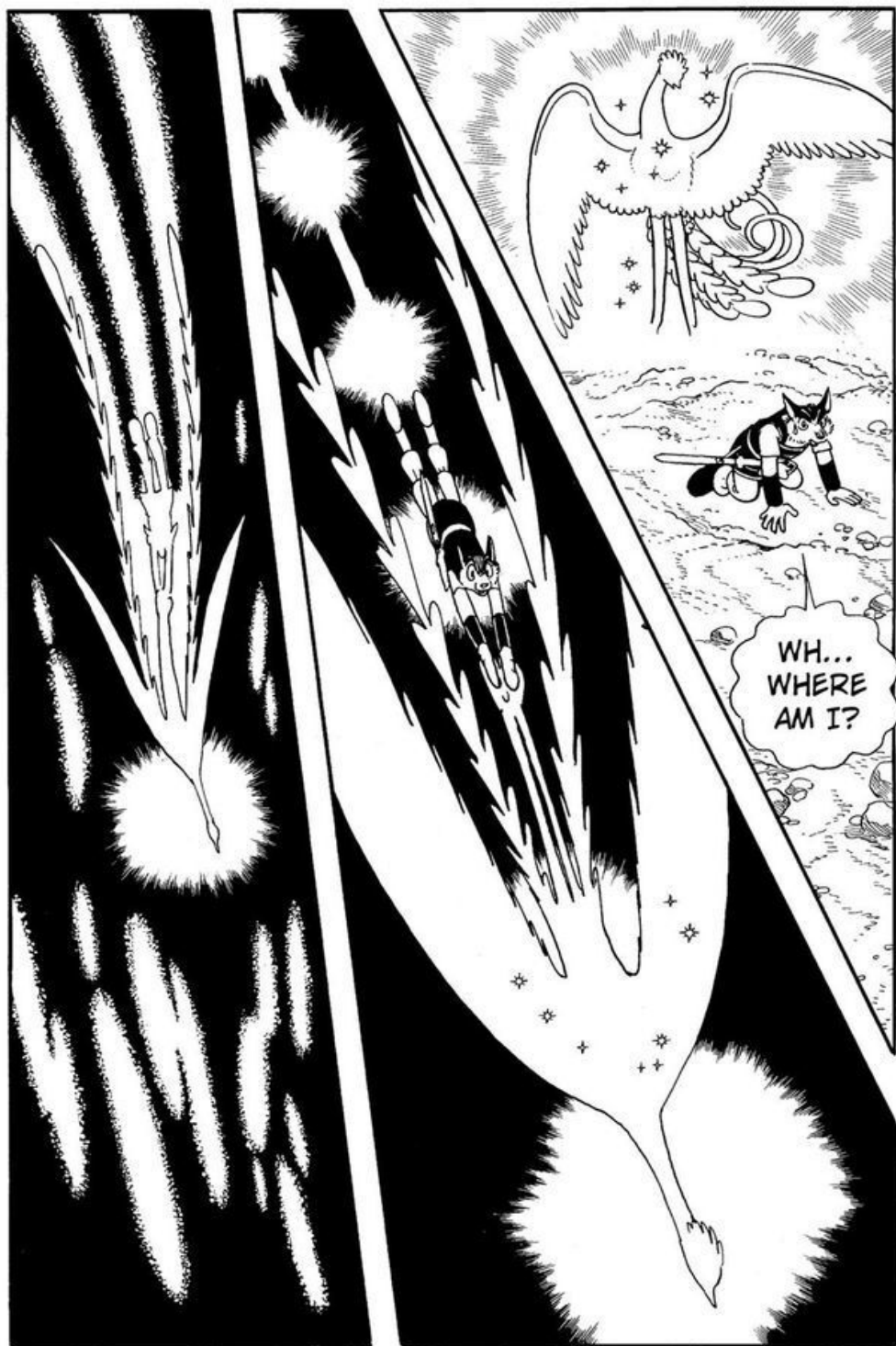
ARE
YOU
SURE...?







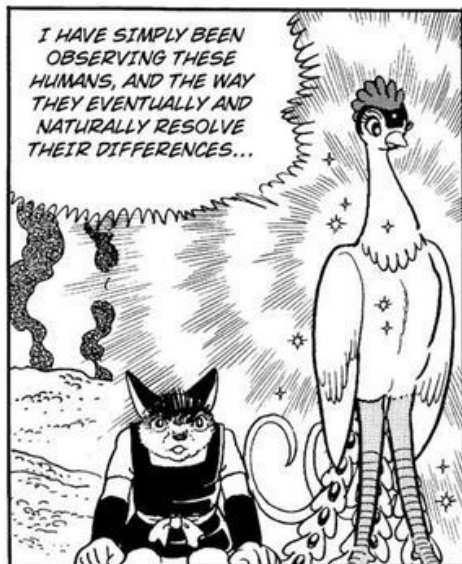






THIS IS THE WORLD
IN WHICH YOU LIVE,
ONLY A THOUSAND
YEARS LATER...

WHAT YOU ARE
SEEING IS A HORRIFIC
BATTLE BETWEEN
TWO DIFFERENT
FAITHS—BETWEEN THE
CHURCH OF LIGHT, AND
THE SHADOW WORLD.



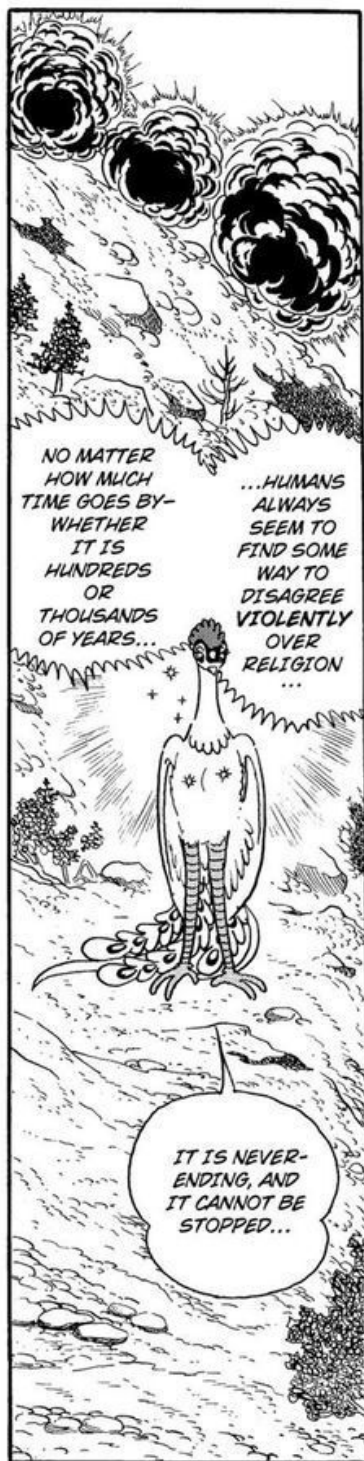
I HAVE SIMPLY BEEN
OBSERVING THESE
HUMANS, AND THE WAY
THEY EVENTUALLY AND
NATURALLY RESOLVE
THEIR DIFFERENCES...



EVEN
AFTER SO
MUCH
DEATH
AND
DESTRUC-
TION?



YES. THIS
WAS A
TERRIBLE
WAR, BUT
RELIGIOUS
WARS ARE
ALWAYS
TERRIBLE...



NO MATTER
HOW MUCH
TIME GOES BY-
WHETHER
IT IS
HUNDREDS
OR
THOUSANDS
OF YEARS...

...HUMANS
ALWAYS
SEEM TO
FIND SOME
WAY TO
DISAGREE
VIOLENTLY
OVER
RELIGION
...

IT IS NEVER-
ENDING, AND
IT CANNOT BE
STOPPED...

NEVER-
ENDING
?

B...BUT
WHY?



WELL, WHATEVER
SORT OF RELIGION
OR FAITH IS
INVOLVED, IT IS
ALWAYS SOMETHING
THAT HUMANS
THEMSELVES
CREATED...

ALL FAITHS AND
RELIGIONS ARE
ULTIMATELY
CORRECT...

AND THAT IS
PRECISELY WHY
THESE HUMAN
WARS CAN
NEVER BE
STOPPED...
BECAUSE
BOTH
SIDES ARE
CORRECT...

SO,
YOU'RE
SAYING
THAT
THOSE
BUDDHIST
INVADERS
ARE
CORRECT,
TOO??

WELL,
I'LL
NEVER BE
CONVINCED
THAT
THEY'RE
THE
TRUE
FAITH!

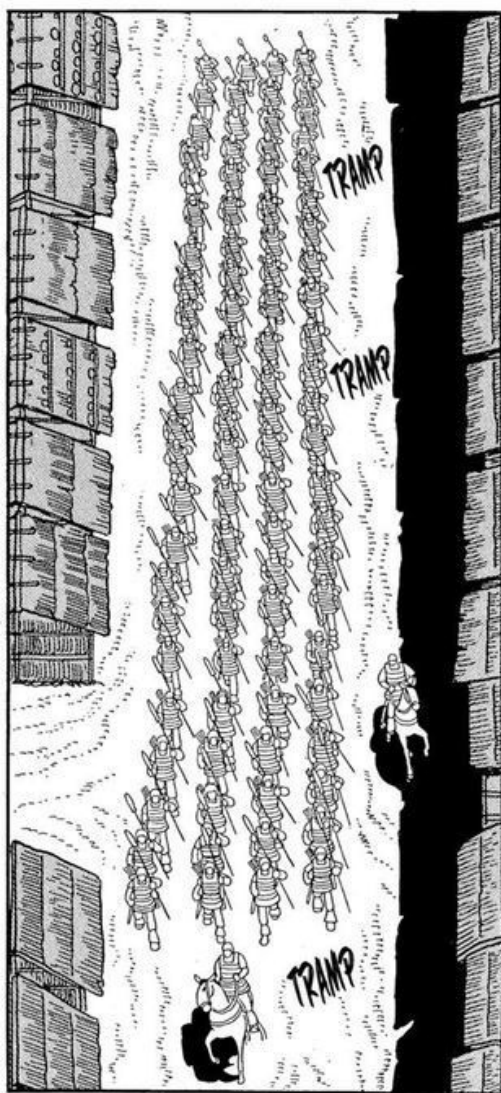


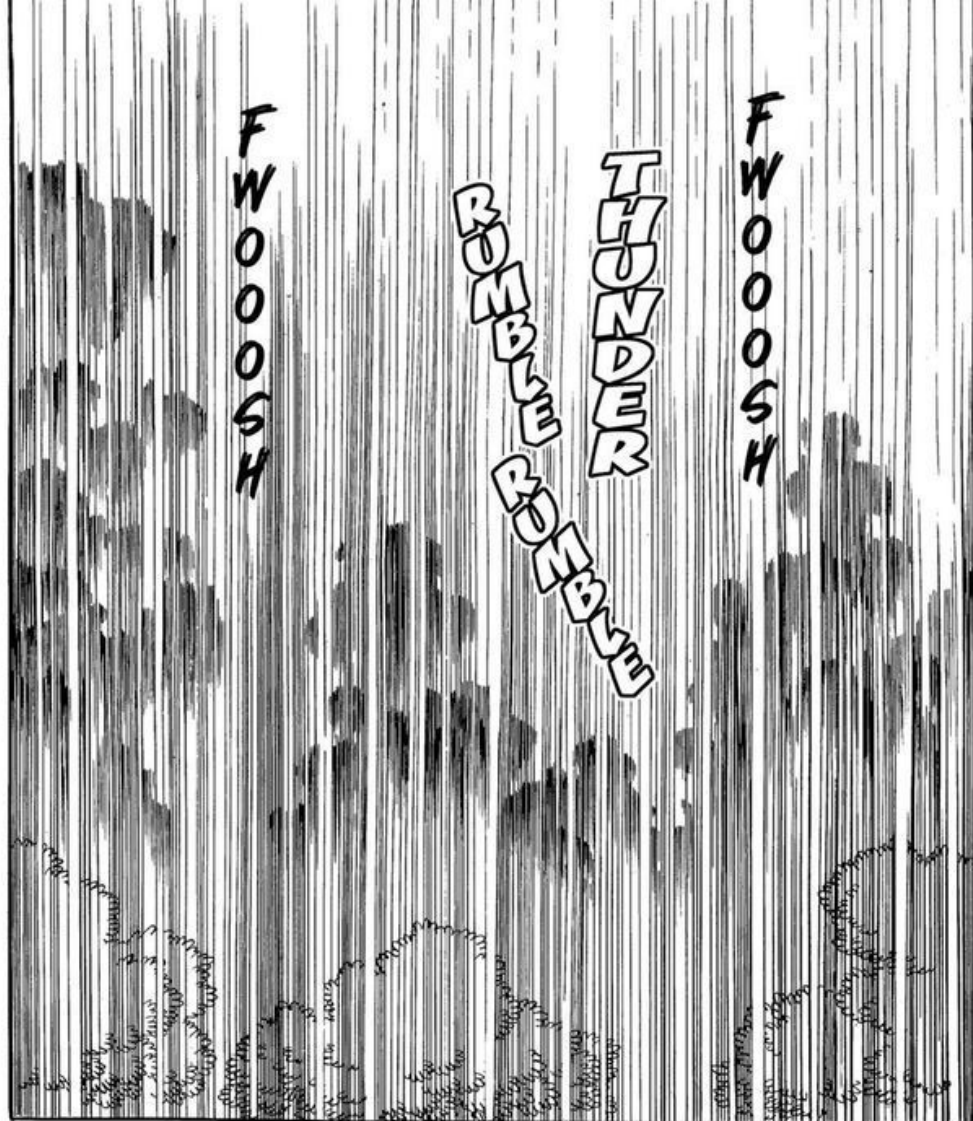
NEVER!







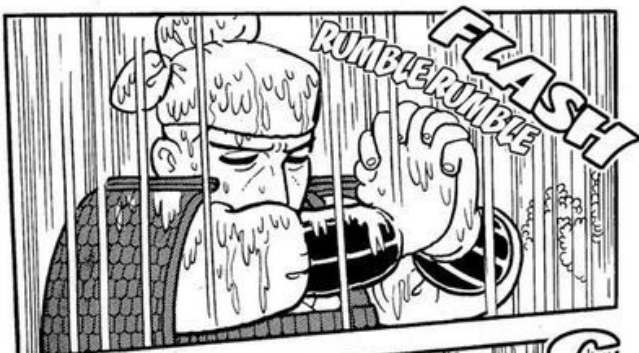








IT IS SAID
THAT THE FUTURE
EMPEROR PRAYED
THAT NIGHT, AS
HE ENDURED THE
LIGHTNING
AND RAIN. HE
CALLED OUT,
"GODS OF HEAVEN
AND EARTH, SAVE
US, AND BRING
AN END TO
THIS THUNDER
AND RAIN."
(NIHON SHOKI,
CHAPTER 28)





LOOK! THERE'S
A STRANGE
LIGHT FLYING
ABOUT!
IT MUST BE
SOME KIND OF
A POWERFUL
LIGHT DEMON!
IT'S AS
BRIGHT AS
THE SUN!



AND LOOK!
THE LIGHT'S
BLOWING THE
CLOUDS AWAY!



LOOK! WE
CAN SEE
THE SKY
AGAIN.
AND THE
STARS!



HURRAH!
THE SKY
HAS
CLEARED!

A NEW
LEASE ON
LIFE!
WE'VE
BEEN
SPARED!
HAPPY NEW
YEAR!!







WHEN I RENOUNCED
THE WORLD AND BEGAN
PURSUING THE PATH
OF BUDDHISM AT
YOSHINO, IT WAS
JUST A SUPERFICIAL
GESTURE...

I HAD NO CHOICE,
BECAUSE IF I
HADN'T DONE
SO MY OLDER
BROTHER WOULD
HAVE HAD ME
ASSASSINATED...



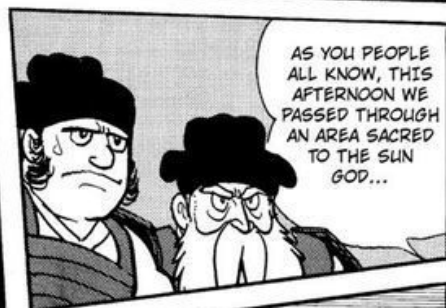
SO YOU COULD
EVEN SAY THAT
MY SHAVED
HEAD IS A
TYPE OF
CAMOUFLAGE...

AT THE CAPITAL,
I'M SURE THEY
SUSPECTED WHAT
WAS GOING
ON...AND OF
COURSE THE
BUDDHIST
DEITIES KNEW
FOR CERTAIN...



...THAT'S
WHY, WHEN
I TURNED
MY BACK ON
THE CAPITAL...

...THEY
MUST
HAVE
DECIDED
TO COME
AFTER
US.



AS YOU PEOPLE
ALL KNOW, THIS
AFTERNOON WE
PASSED THROUGH
AN AREA SACRED
TO THE SUN
GOD...



THAT'S
WHEN IT
HAPPENED...
THAT'S WHEN
I WAS TAKEN
BY SOME SORT
OF SPIRIT...



AND...THAT
WASN'T A
BUDDHIST
DEITY?



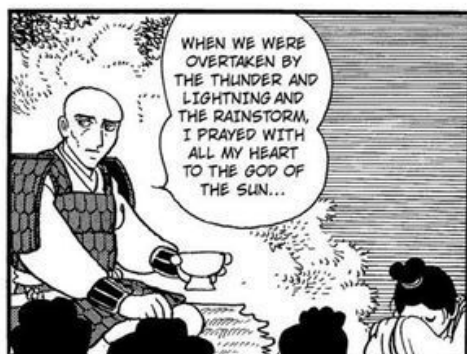
NO...IT
WASN'T...
IT WAS
SOMETHING
EVEN MORE
POWERFUL...
AN EVEN
GREATER
GOD...

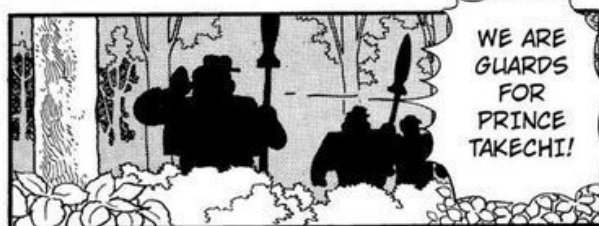
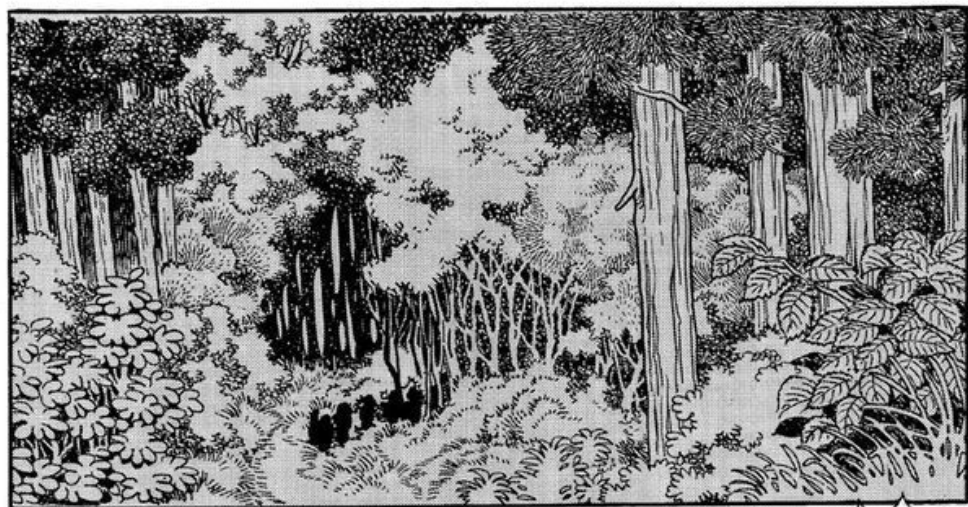


...IT
WAS
THE
SUN
GOD...



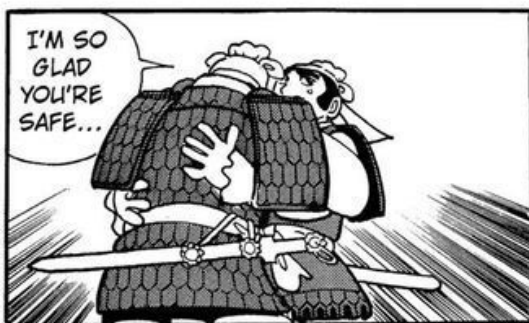
...THAT
WAS THE
SPIRIT
THAT
ENTERED
ME.







FATHER!



I'M SO
GLAD
YOU'RE
SAFE...



MY
SON
!!!



YOU'VE
DONE WELL
TO MAKE
IT HERE,
TAKECHI...
WE'VE BEEN
WAITING
FOR YOU...

MY
BROTHER
HURT
HIS LEG,
SO HE
WON'T
ARRIVE
'TIL
TOMORROW.



I UNDER-
STAND!

BUT FATHER...
PRINCESS TOCHI...
WAS KILLED BY
OTOMO...



I
KNOW,
SON...
I KNOW
...

I'M SO
SORRY,
FATHER
...

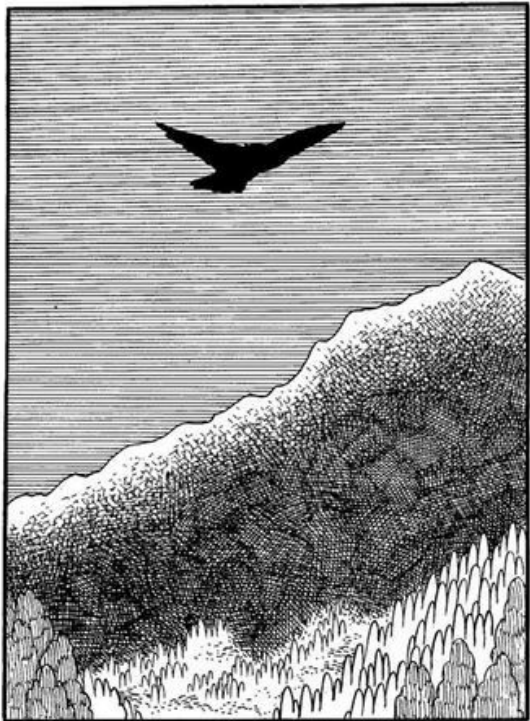
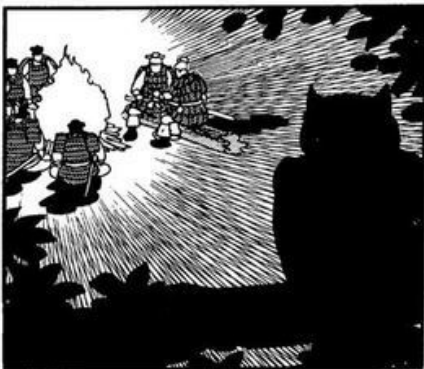
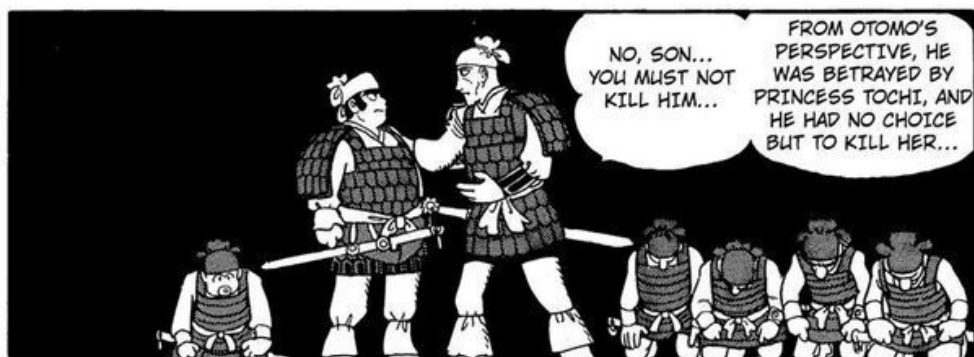


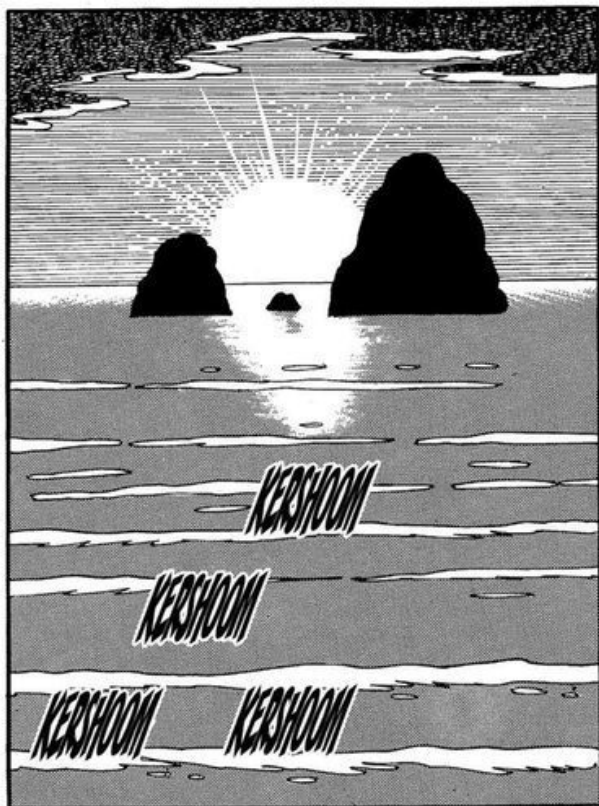
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT,
SON...OTOMO IS OUR BLOOD
RELATIVE, BUT EVEN RELATIVES
CAN BE ENEMIES... SOMETIMES
THEY EVEN KILL EACH OTHER...
IN THE POWER STRUGGLES OF
COURTS AROUND THE WORLD,
IT HAPPENS ALL
THE TIME...

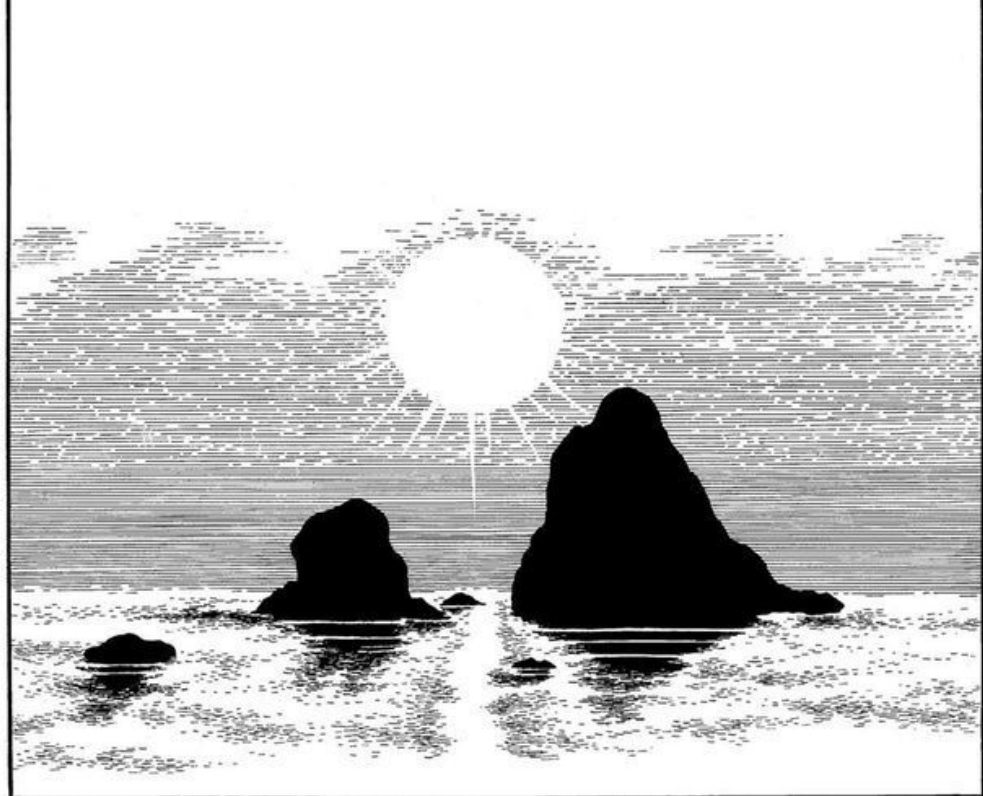


I'LL
NEVER
FOR-
GIVE
WHAT
OTOMO
DID!
NEVER!

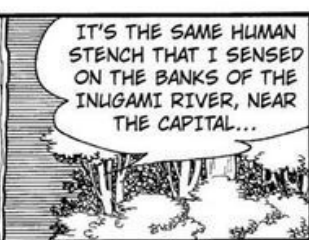
I PROMISE I'LL
GET REVENGE.
I WILL!



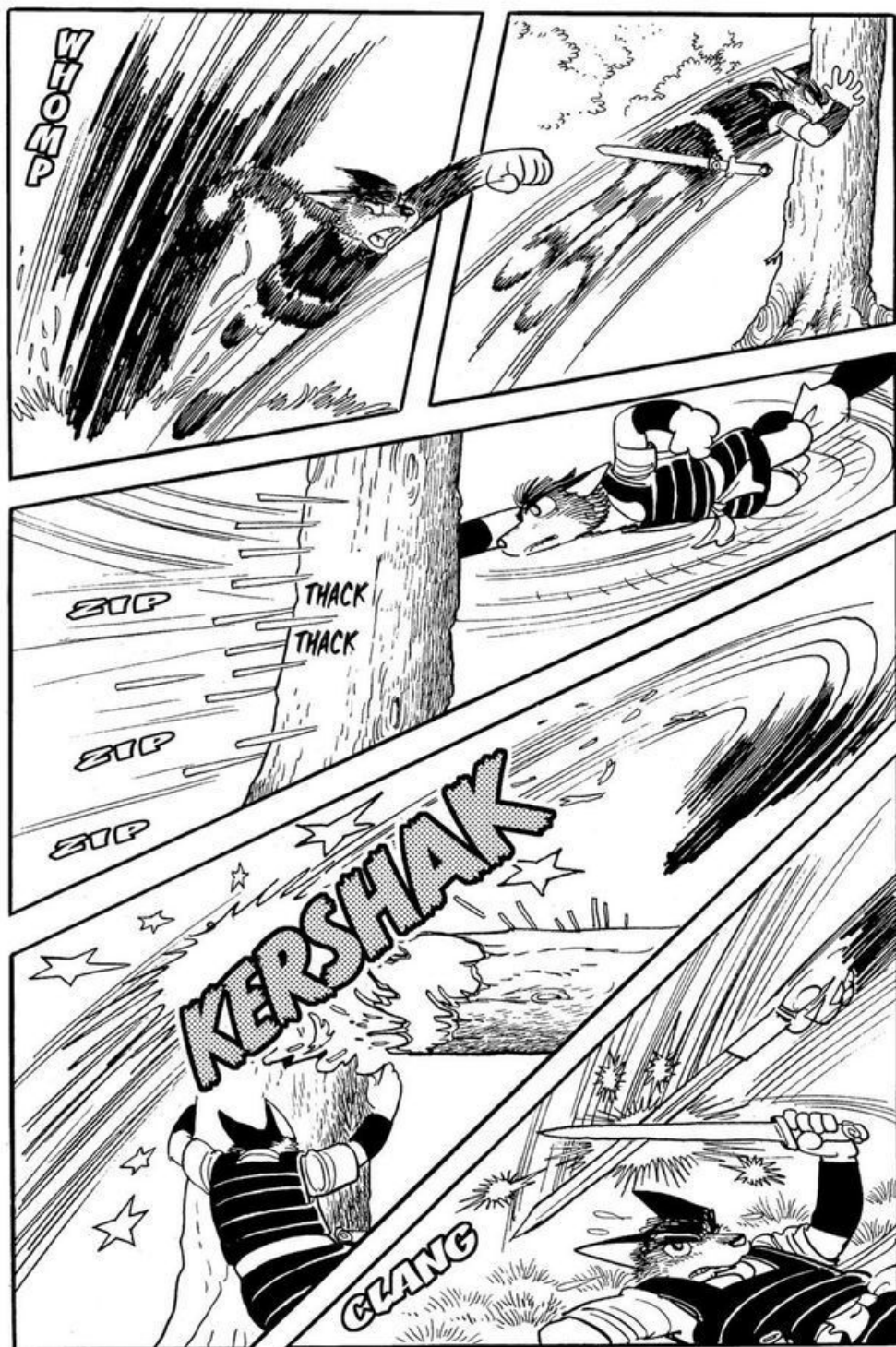






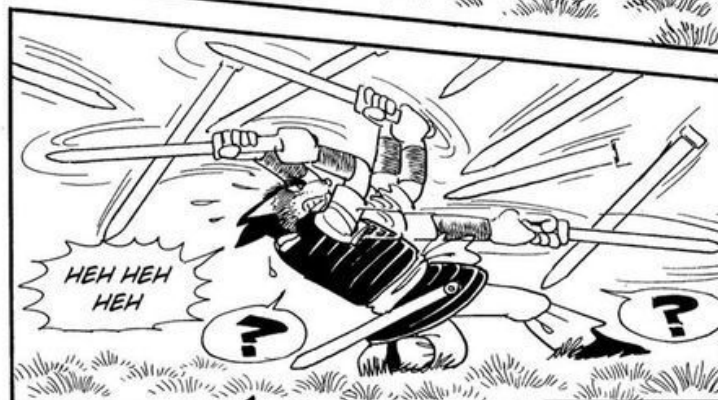


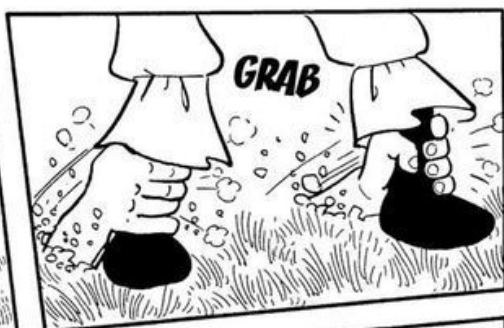


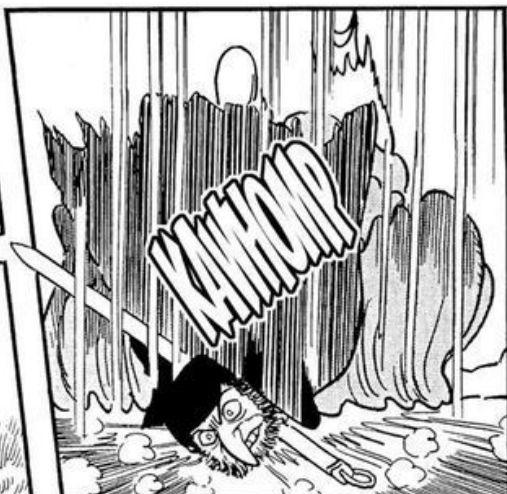




WHA HA HA HA HA!
OPEN YOUR EYES,
DOG-MAN! EVERY
SWORD YOU
SEE IS BUT AN
ILLUSION!
YOU'RE CUTTING
NOTHING
BUT **AIR!**

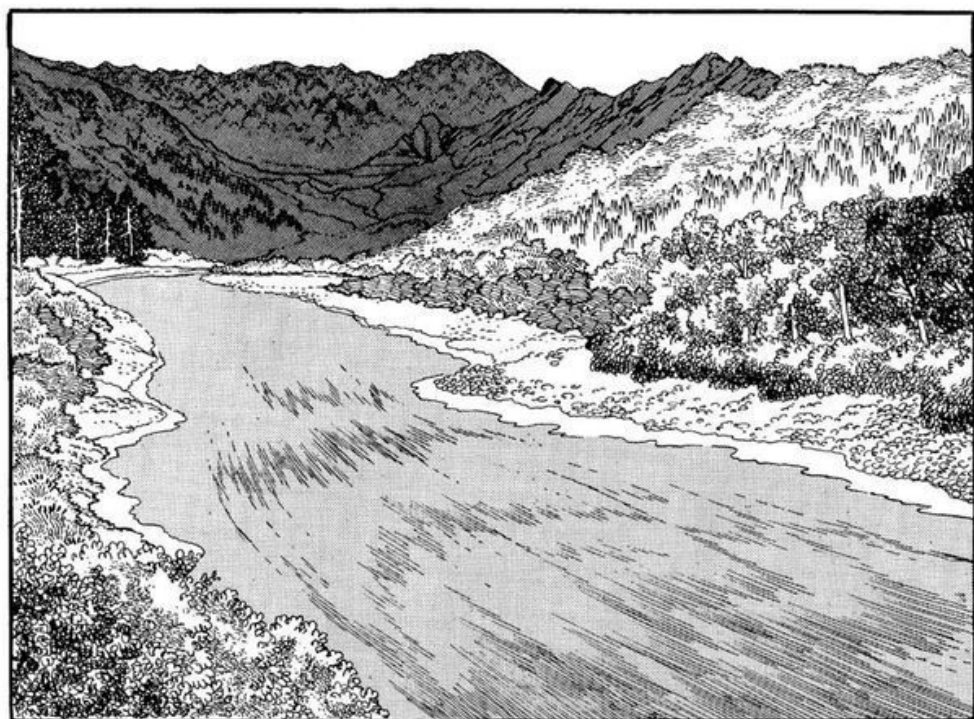
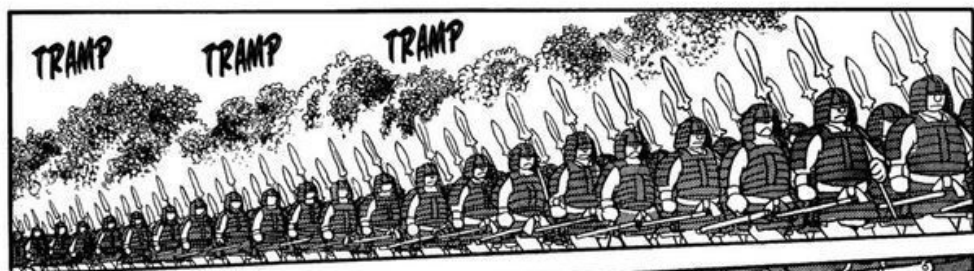






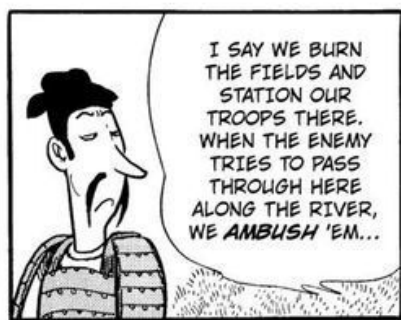
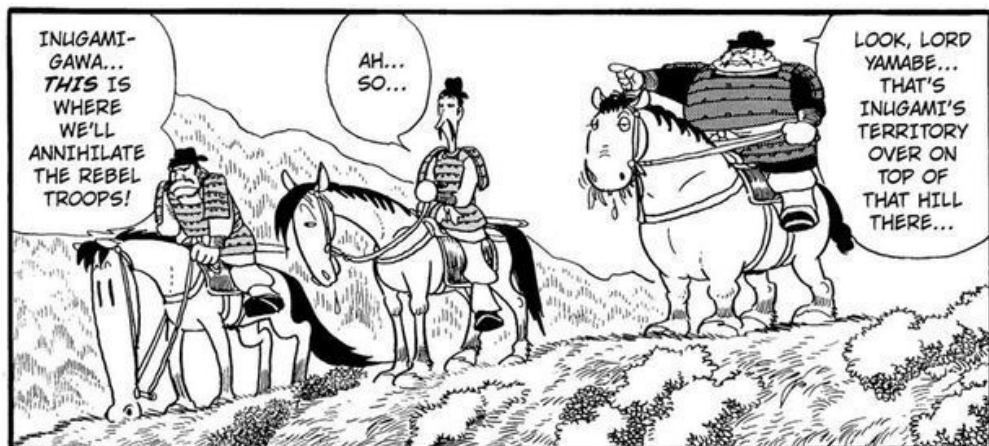


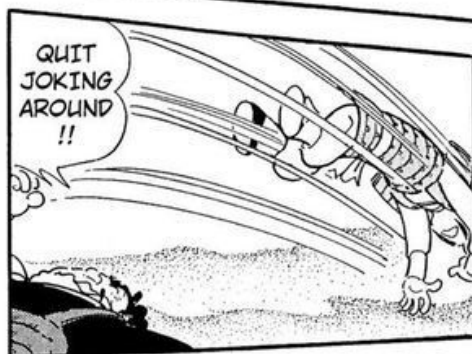
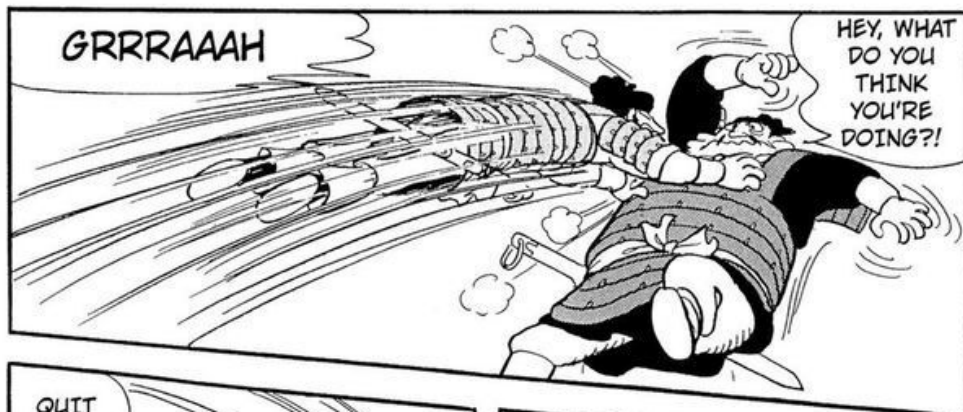




HERE
WE ARE...
THE
INUGAMIGAWA
RIVER!

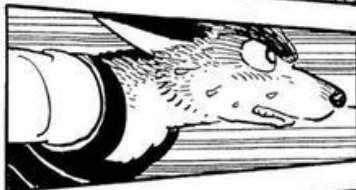
WE'VE MADE IT!



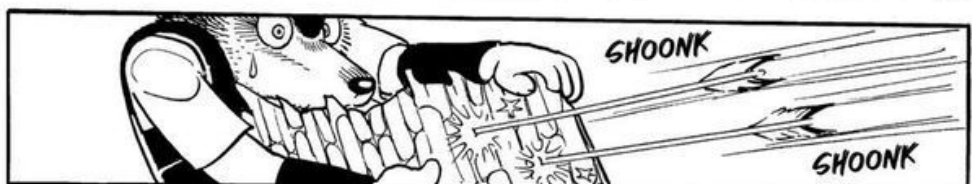


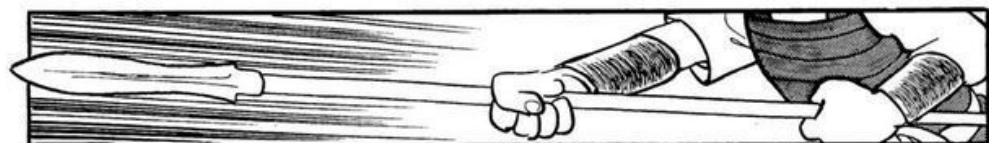
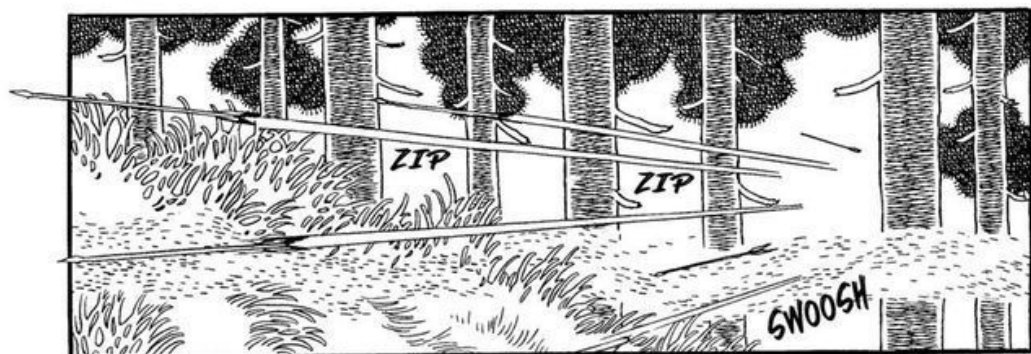


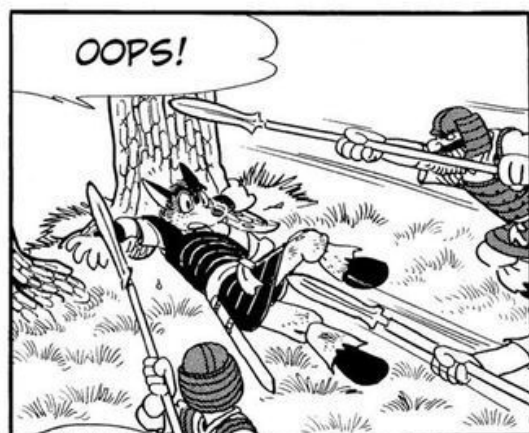




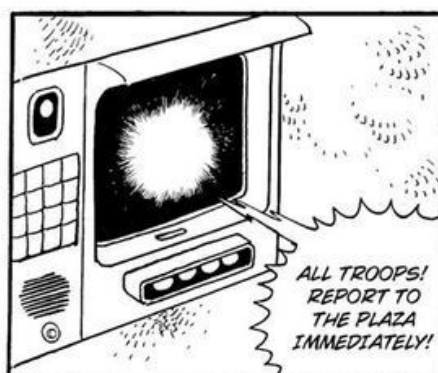
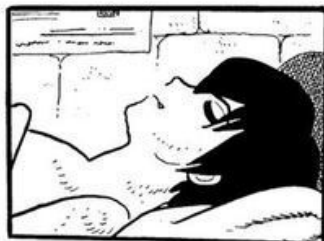




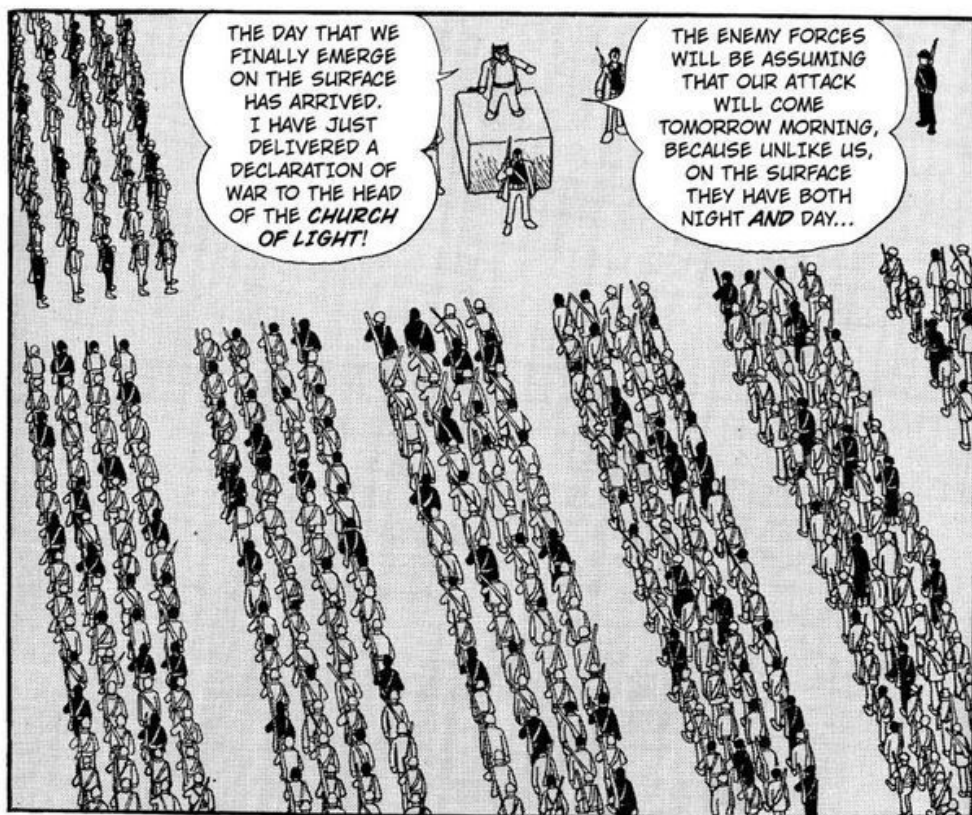


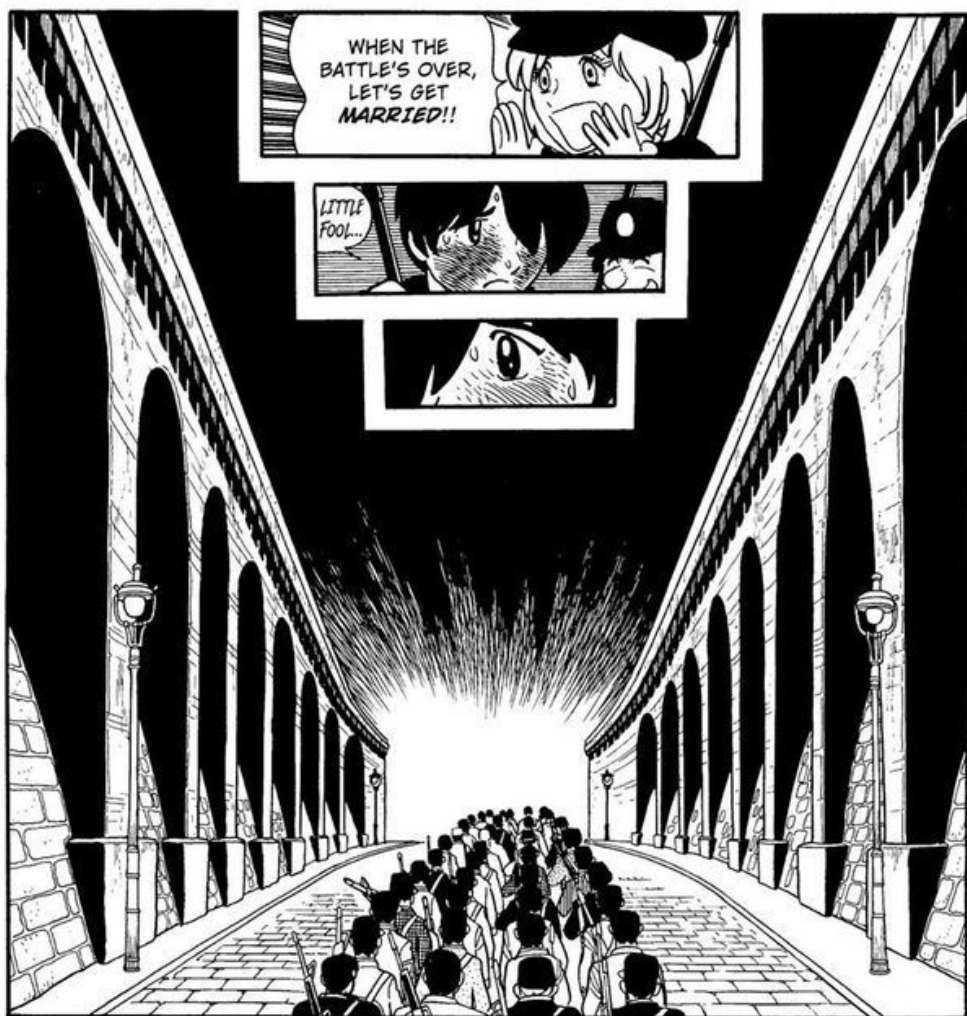
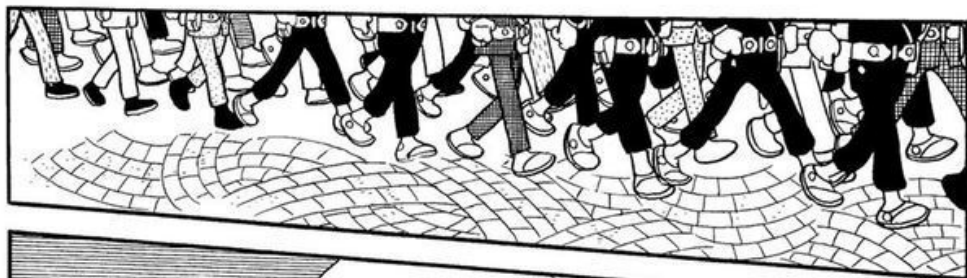
















B AND C CORPS
HAVE SET
OFF THE
DIVERSIONARY
EXPLOSIONS,
SIR!



THE CHURCH OF
LIGHT'S ENTIRE
DEFENSE FORCE
WILL NOW BE
FOCUSED ON THE
EXPLOSIONS...

SO WE'VE GOT
TO ATTACK
WHILE THEIR
ATTENTION'S
DIVERTED...
NOW'S OUR
CHANCE!!



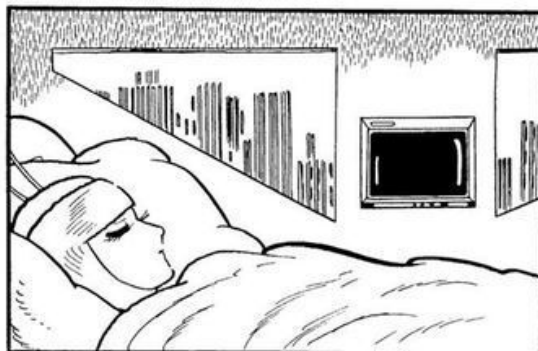
ATTACK
TROOPS!
MOVE
OUT!



ATTENTION
ALL CITIZENS!
ALL CITIZENS!
THIS IS A
CITY-WIDE ALERT!
MARTIAL LAW
HAS BEEN
DECLARED
THROUGHOUT
THE CAPITAL!

EVERYONE IS
TO GO HOME
AND STAY
INSIDE.
OUTDOOR
ASSEMBLY IS
PROHIBITED
!!

ANYONE
CAUGHT
TRYING TO
FLEE THE
AREA WILL BE
EXECUTED AS A
TRAITOR!!



...DEAR...

HOW
IS YOUR
HEAD?



WHAT'S ALL
THE NOISE
OUTSIDE?

UH...THE
CITIZENS ARE ALL
TRYING TO FLEE
AT ONCE, AND THE
ROADS ARE A
TOTAL MESS...

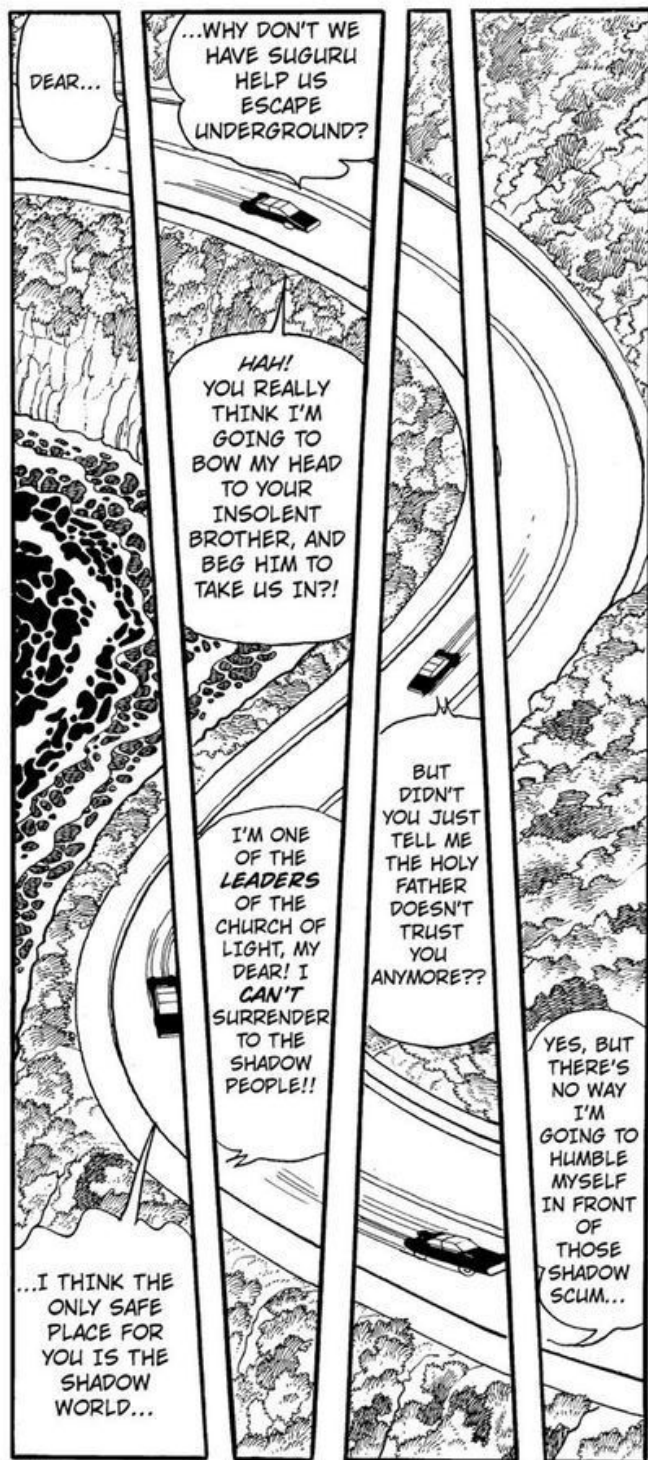


YOU'RE GOING
TO HAVE TO
LEAVE HERE
SOON, TOO...

WHAT?

YOU'RE
GOING TO
FLEE
OVERSEAS...
WITH ME!





DEAR...

...WHY DON'T WE
HAVE SUGURU
HELP US
ESCAPE
UNDERGROUND?

HAA!
YOU REALLY
THINK I'M
GOING TO
BOW MY HEAD
TO YOUR
INSOLENT
BROTHER, AND
BEG HIM TO
TAKE US IN?!

I'M ONE
OF THE
LEADERS
OF THE
CHURCH OF
LIGHT, MY
DEAR! I
CAN'T
SURRENDER
TO THE
SHADOW
PEOPLE!!

...I THINK THE
ONLY SAFE
PLACE FOR
YOU IS THE
SHADOW
WORLD...

BUT
DIDN'T
YOU JUST
TELL ME
THE HOLY
FATHER
DOESN'T
TRUST
YOU
ANYMORE??

YES, BUT
THERE'S
NO WAY
I'M
GOING TO
HUMBLE
MYSELF
IN FRONT
OF
THOSE
SHADOW
SCUM...



I DO HAVE A
SENSE OF
PRIDE, YOU
KNOW...
SHADOW
LAND'S LIKE
A COLONY
FOR
LOSERS
...



BEFORE ALL
OF THIS,
SUGURU
AND I
COULD BE...

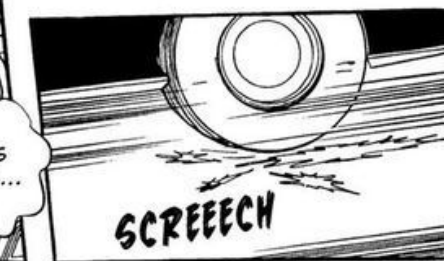
...ORDINARY
SIBLINGS...
WE WERE
LIKE ANY
**BROTHER AND
SISTER.**



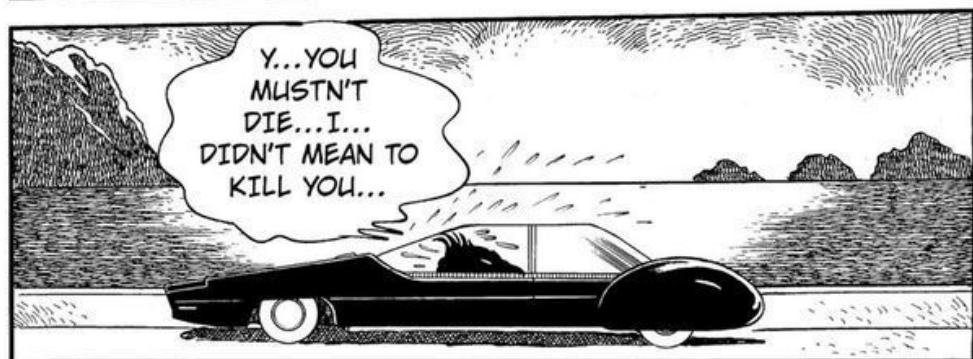
I MARRIED
YOU FOR
ONE
REASON-
BECAUSE
I LOVED
YOU...

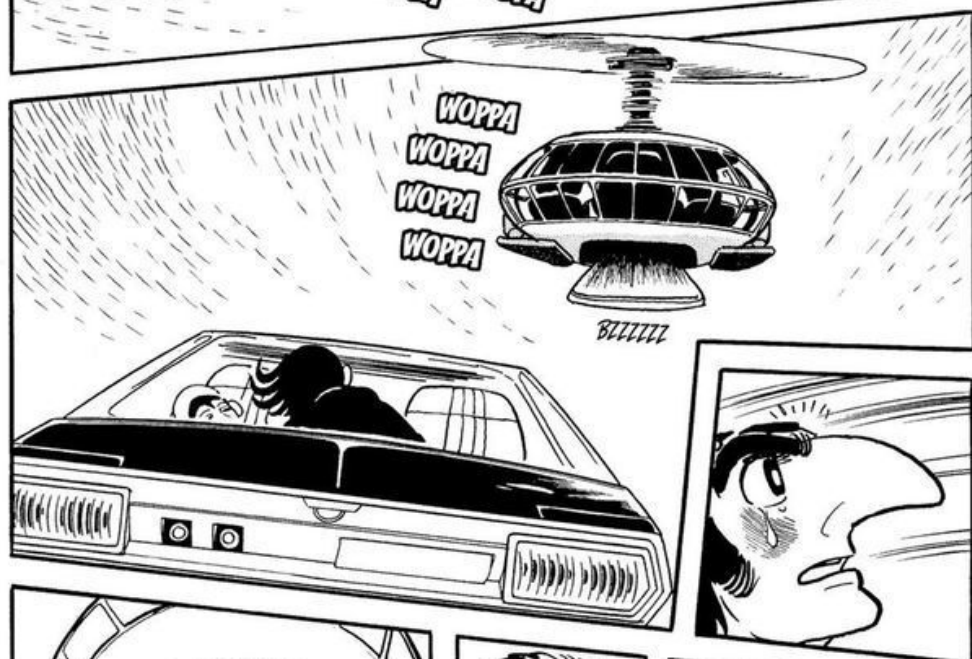


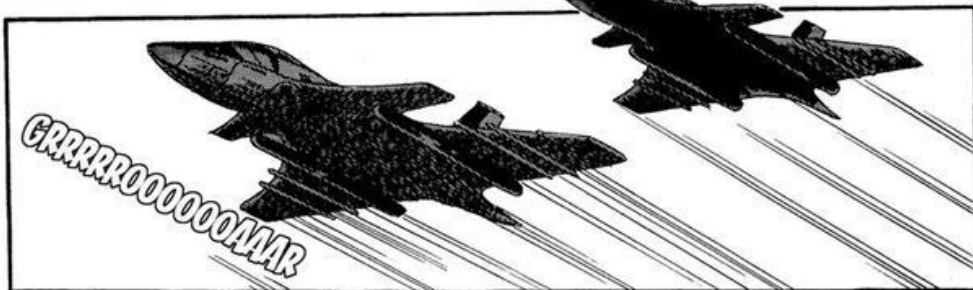
...BUT THE MOMENT I
DID, IT TORE SUGURU
AND I APART!

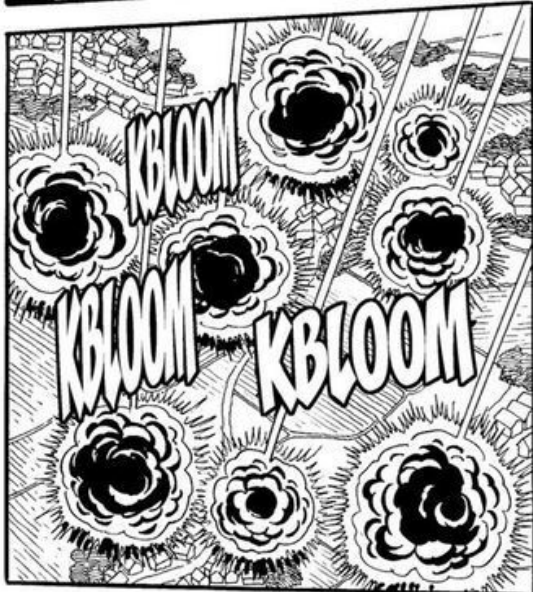






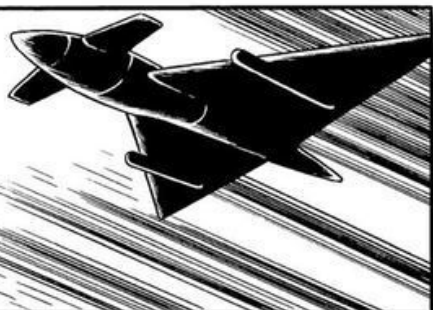


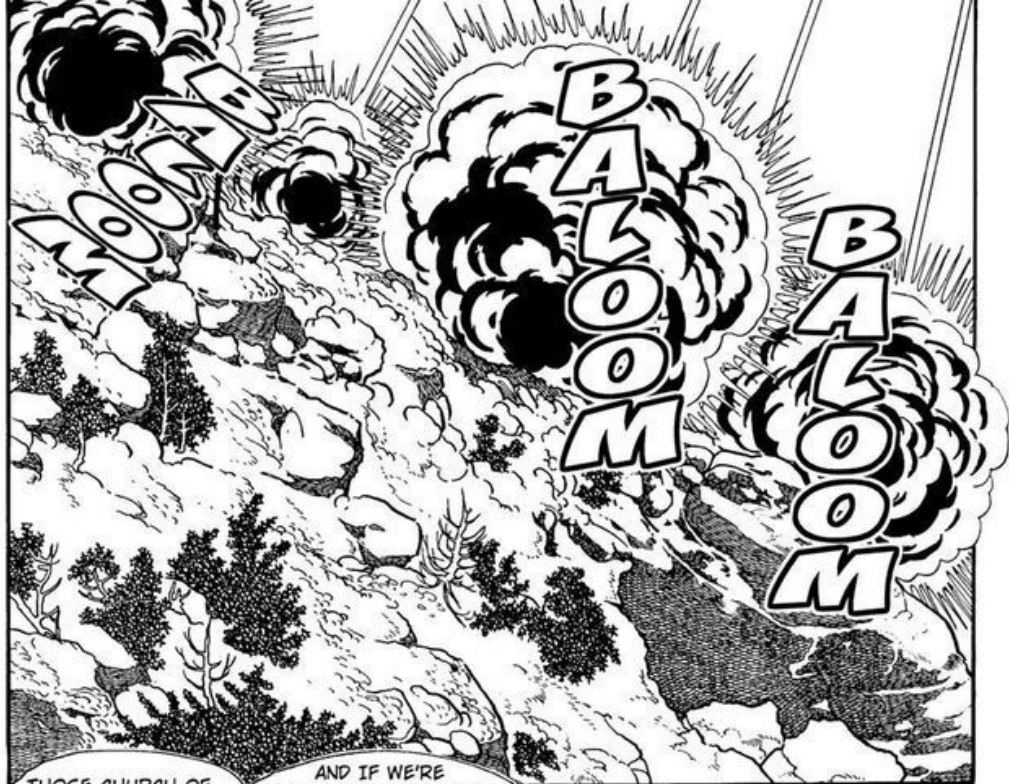






...TO COME THIS
FAR, JUST TO
END UP LIKE
SITTING DUCKS
FOR THEIR
ROBO-PLANES...
IT LOOKS LIKE
OUR LUCK'S
RUN OUT...





THOSE CHURCH OF LIGHT GUYS'RE NO SLOUCHES, HUH? THEY PINPOINT OUR EVERY MOVE AND BOMB THE HECK OUT OF US.

AND IF WE'RE BOTTLED UP HERE, THE ATTACK ON THE CAPITAL'LL BE *SUICIDE*. WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO TAKE THE MAIN LINES INTO THE CITY.



WE'RE IN A SPOT, ALL RIGHT...

WE'RE ON THE VERGE OF BEING DRIVEN BACK UNDERGROUND ...



CAPTAIN!

I KNOW THOSE ROBOT ATTACK PLANES ARE BEING CONTROLLED FROM THE ENEMY'S COMMAND CENTER AT ASHIDAKAHARA.

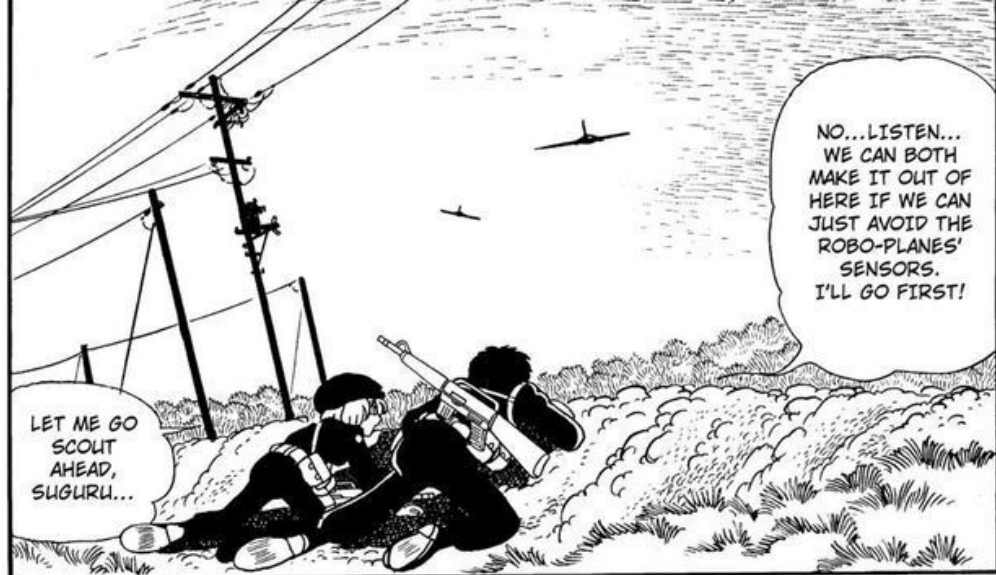


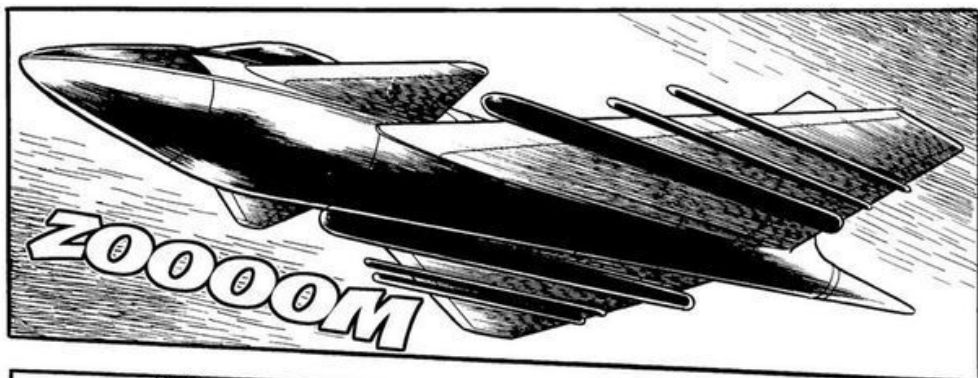
LET ME GO THERE AND BLOW THE CENTER UP! I KNOW THE AREA WELL! I KNOW I CAN DO IT...

THINK YOU CAN DO IT ALONE?

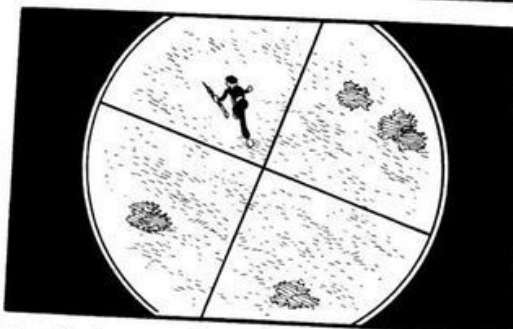






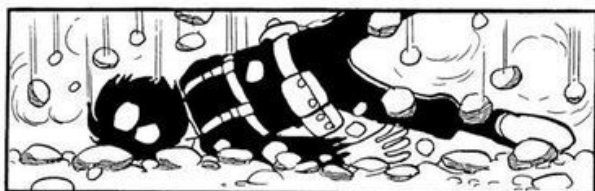


INORI!!
GET DOWN!
GET DOWN
AND DON'T
MOVE!!



INORI!!

SCRRREEEEE







MY
POOR
VILLAGE
!!



WHAT'RE
YOU SO
UPSET
ABOUT?

YOUR
VILLAGE
IS
FINE...



IT
IS
?!



IT'S
FINE??!

ARE YOU
TELLING
THE
TRUTH?

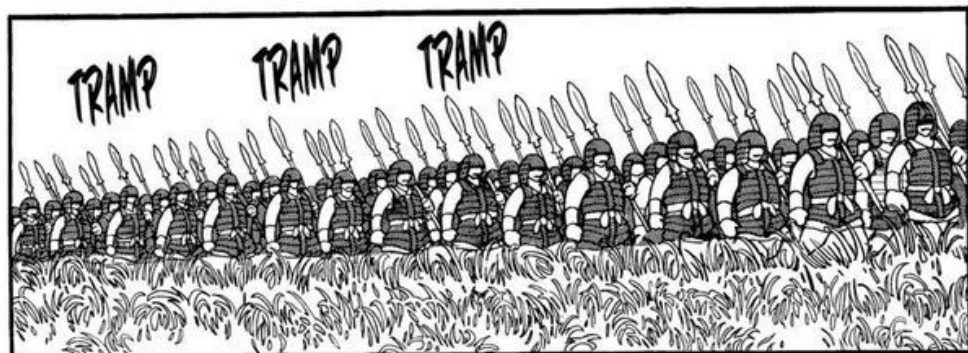
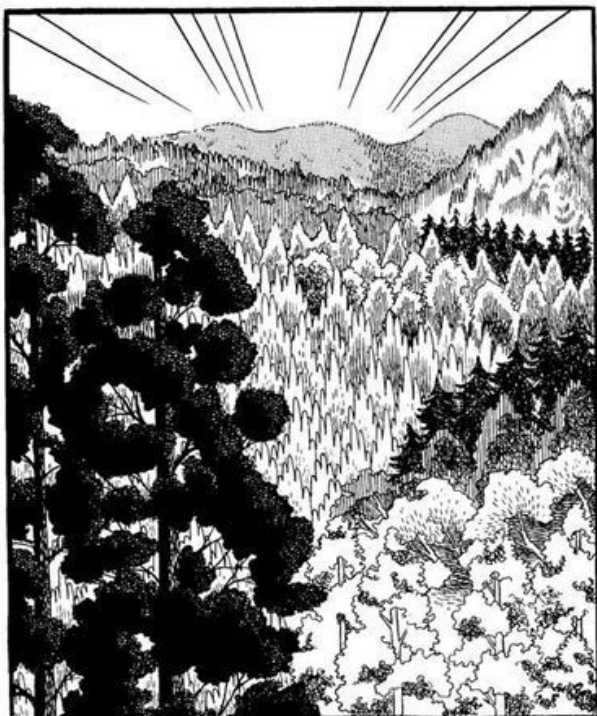
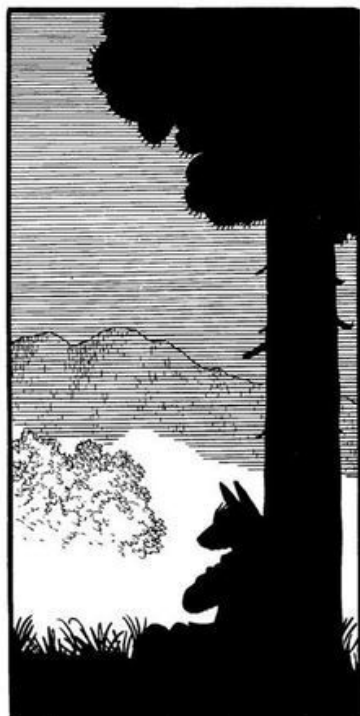
YEAH...THERE WAS
APPARENTLY SOME
KIND OF STRUGGLE
AMONG THE OMI
GOVERNMENT
FORCES BY THE
INUGAMI RIVER,
AND ALL HELL
BROKE OUT...

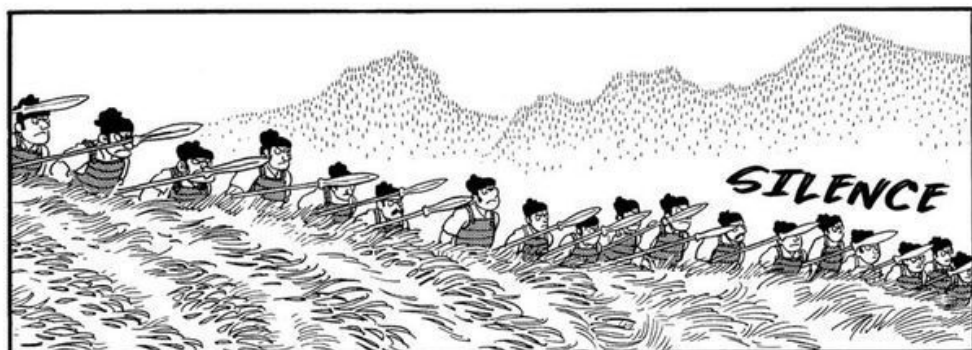


"STRUGGLE"?
W...WHAT
HAPPENED?

WELL, WE GOT A
REPORT FROM ONE OF
OUR SPIES. A GENERAL
OF THEIRS NAMED
YAMABE APPARENTLY
WENT NUTS ALL OF A
SUDDEN, AND GENERAL
HATAYASHI KILLED
HIM...THEN
HATAYASHI WENT
CRAZY, TOO!

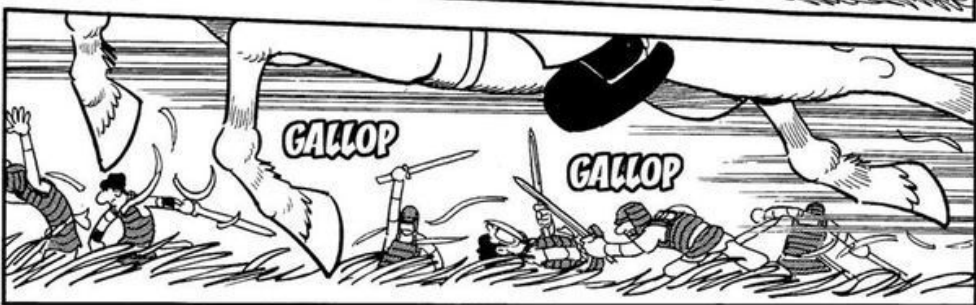
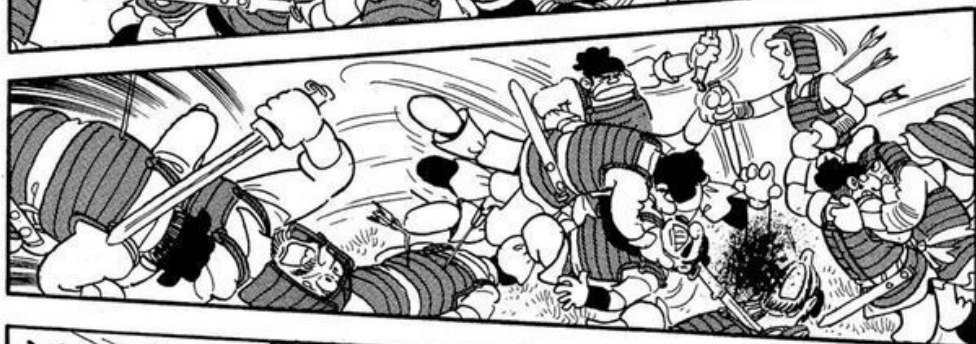




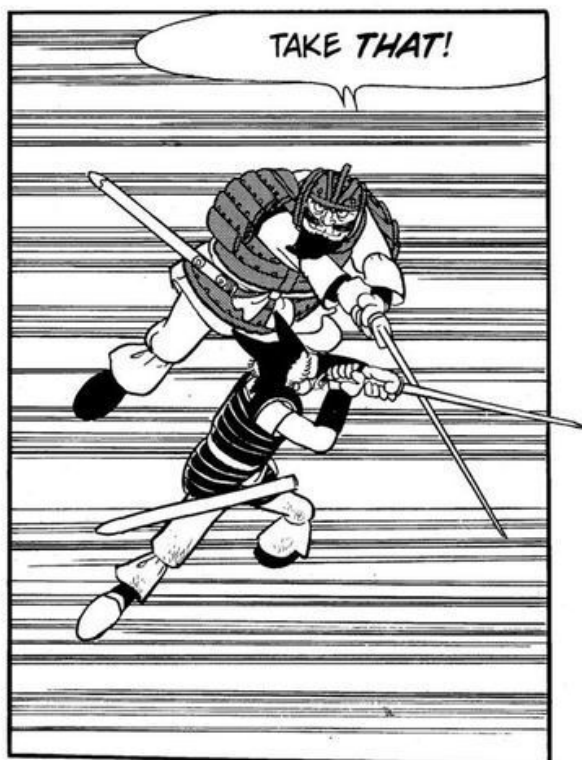
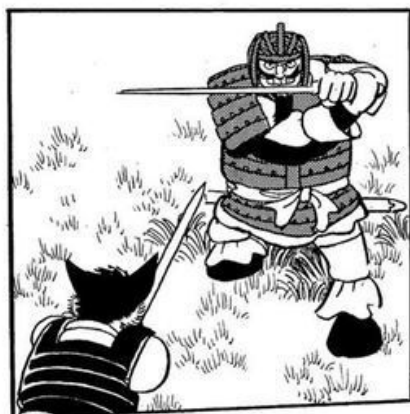


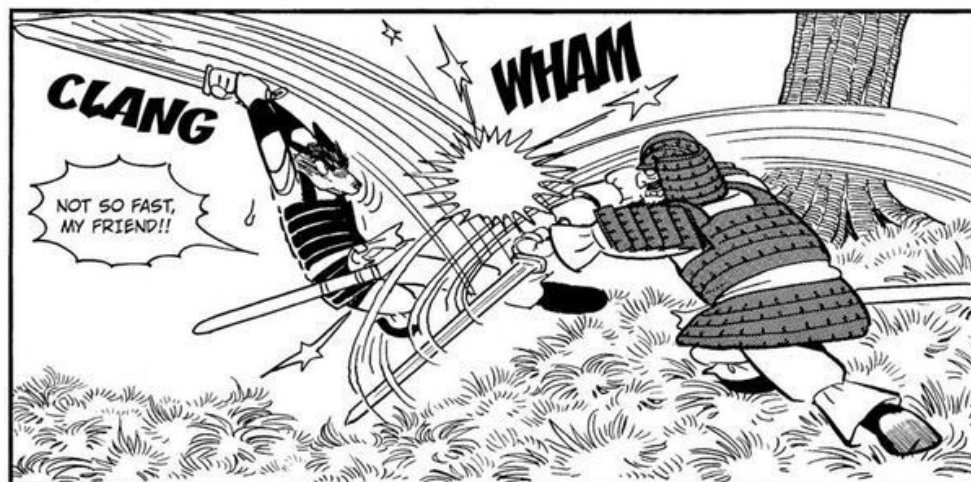




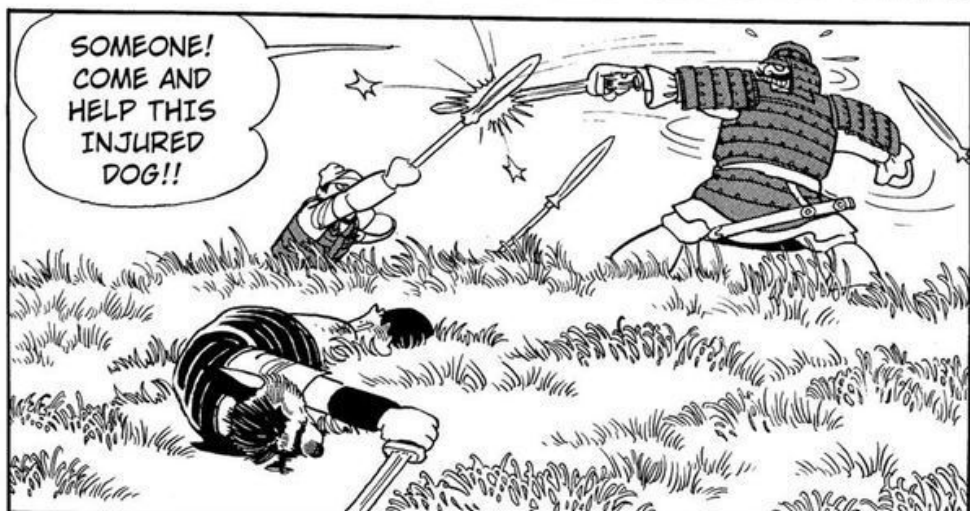
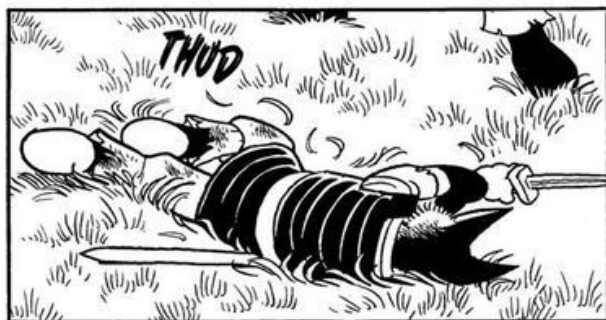














LINGGHHHHH

AH...I YAM A
VENERABLE
VETERINARIAN
...



THIS IS
A VERY
SERIOUS
WOUND,
YES...
NOSE AND
UPPER
JAW BE
SLASHED...

LISTEN,
YOU OLD
TANG
QUACK...
I CAN TELL
THAT MUCH
JUST BY
LOOKING
AT HIM!!



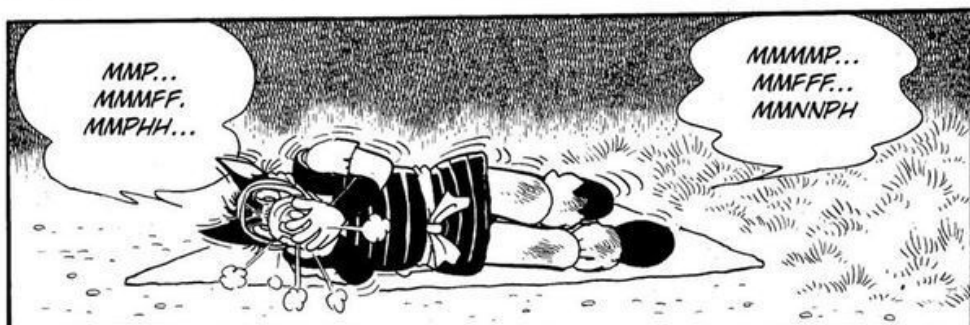
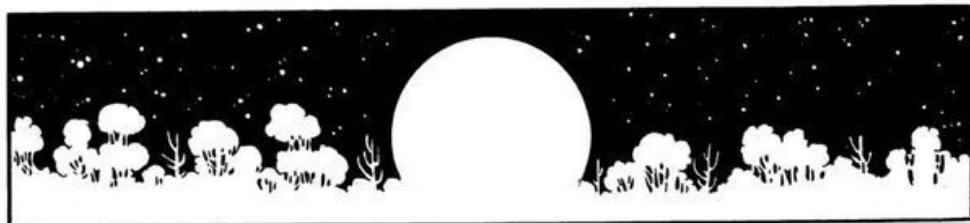
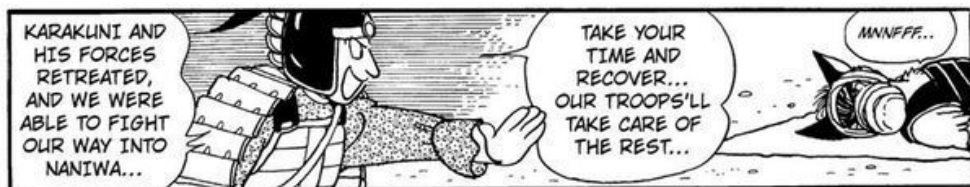
I WANT TO
KNOW IF
HE'LL
RECOVER
OR NOT!

YES, SIR...
HE BE SLASHED
TO THE BONE...
EVEN IF HE BE CURED,
BONES BE DAMAGED.
MAYBE NOT
ABLE TO BREATHE
FREELY...
MAYBE NOT ABLE
TO TALK...MAYBE NOT
ABLE TO EAT...



DOG-MAN...
ARE YOU
CONSCIOUS?
CAN YOU
HEAR
ME?

I HAVE TO
THANK YOU!
BECAUSE OF
YOUR EXTRA-
ORDINARY
BRAVERY,
THIS TIME
OUR TROOPS
WON A
GLORIOUS
VICTORY!!







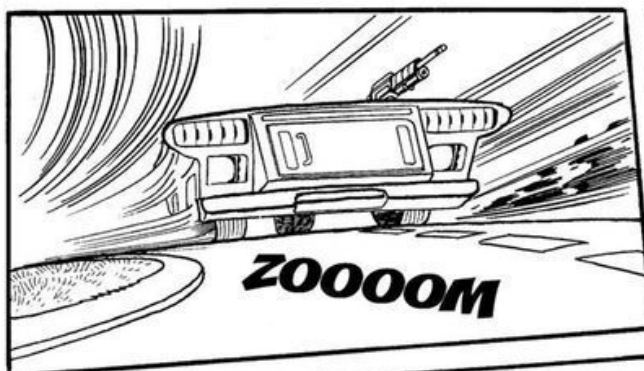
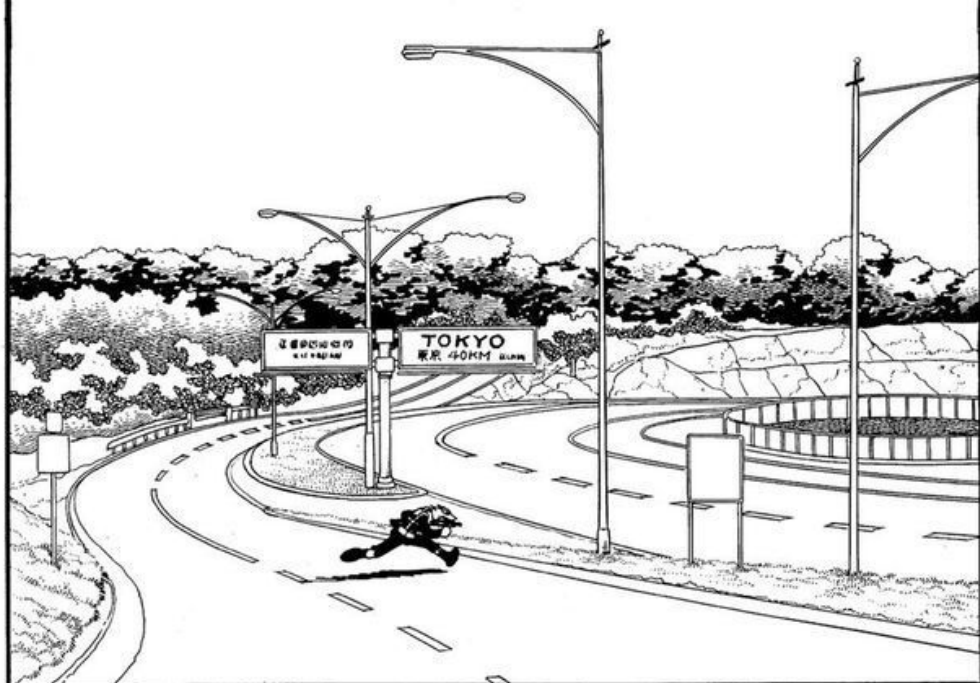


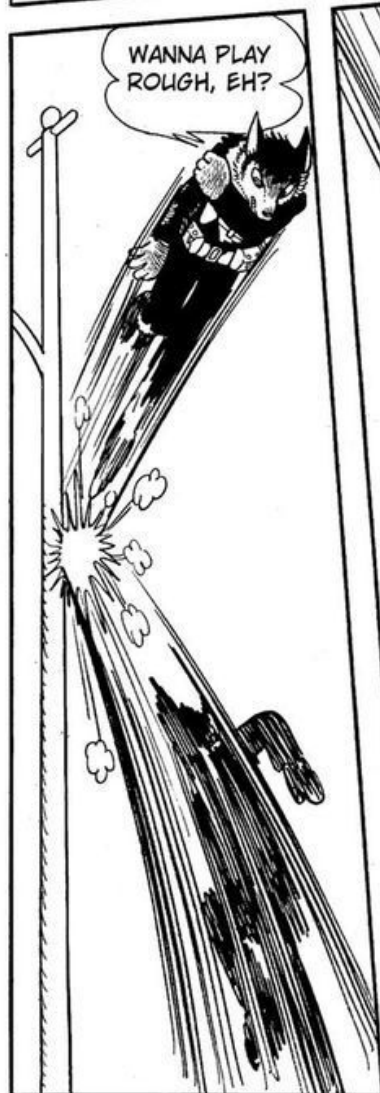




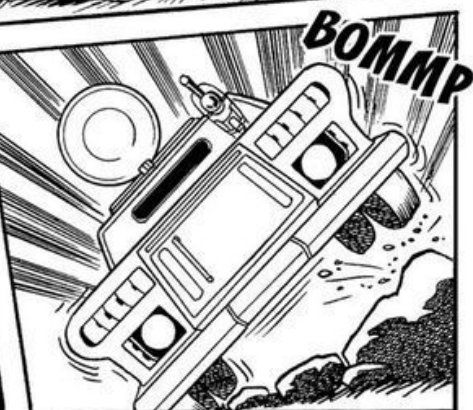
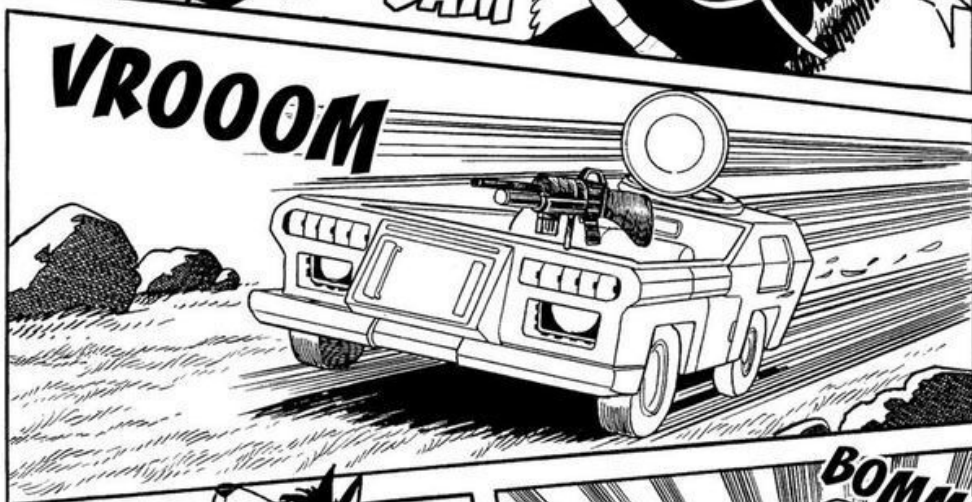
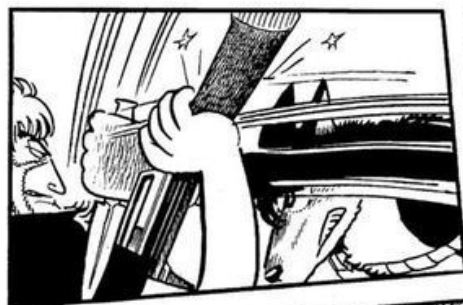




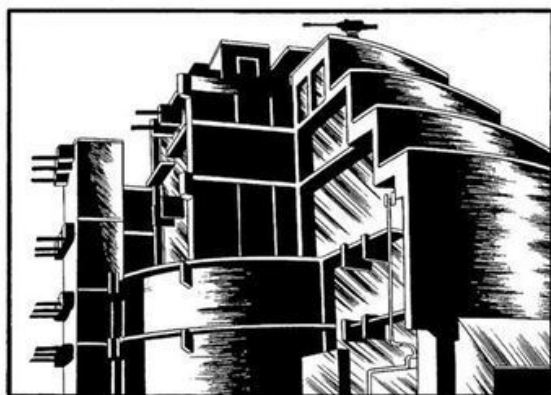
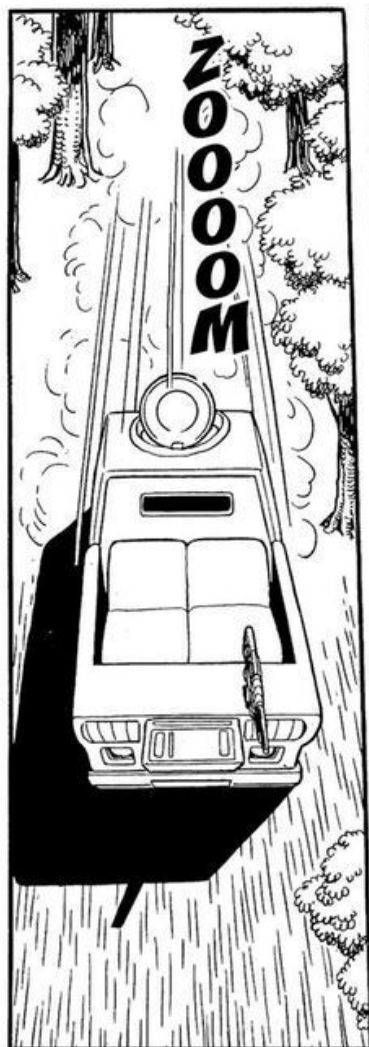


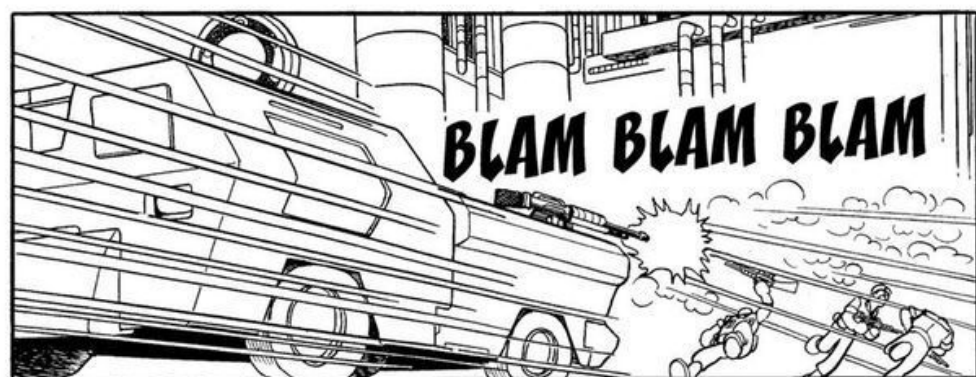
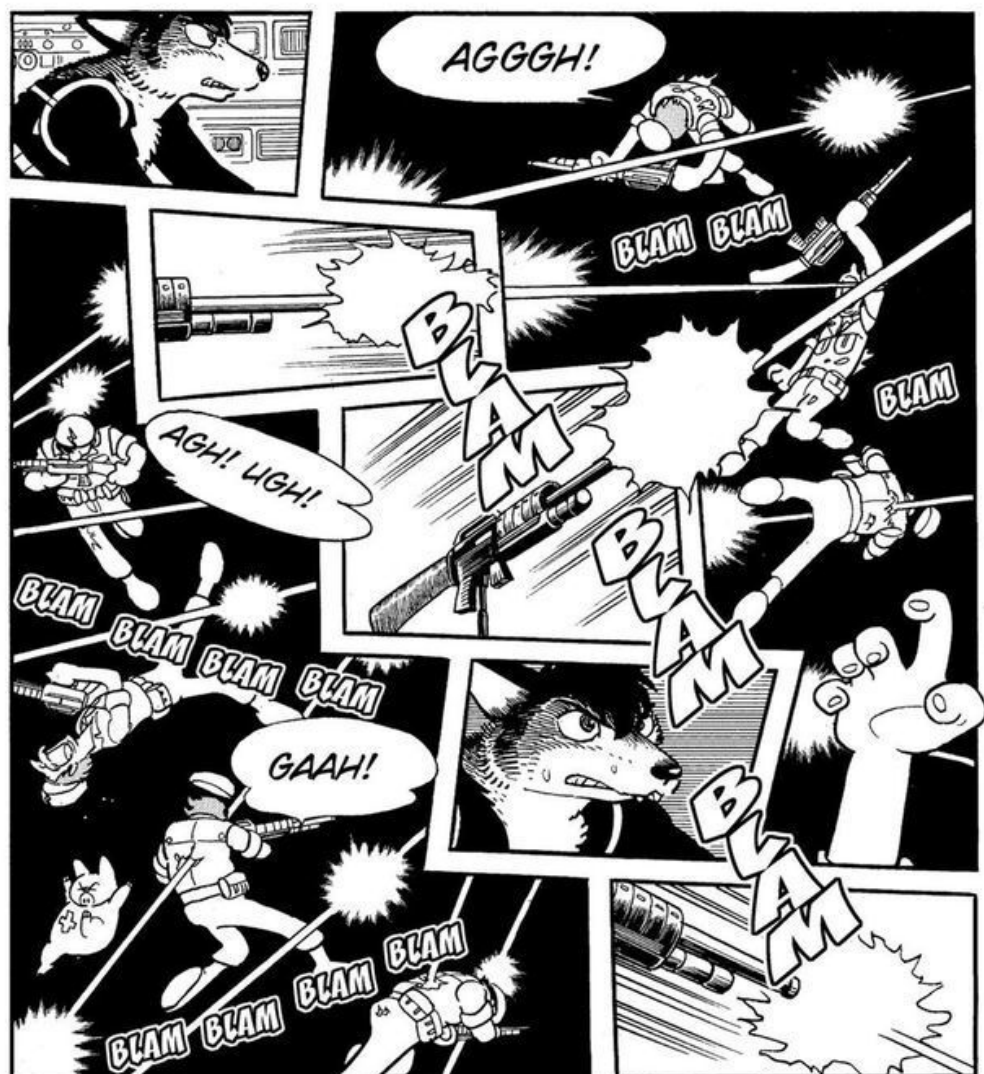


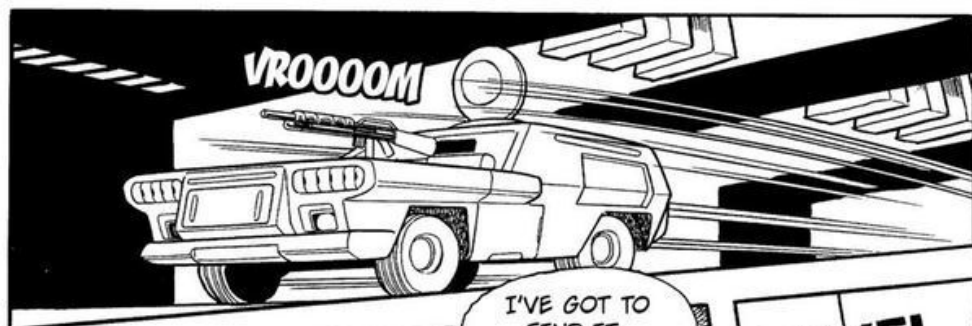


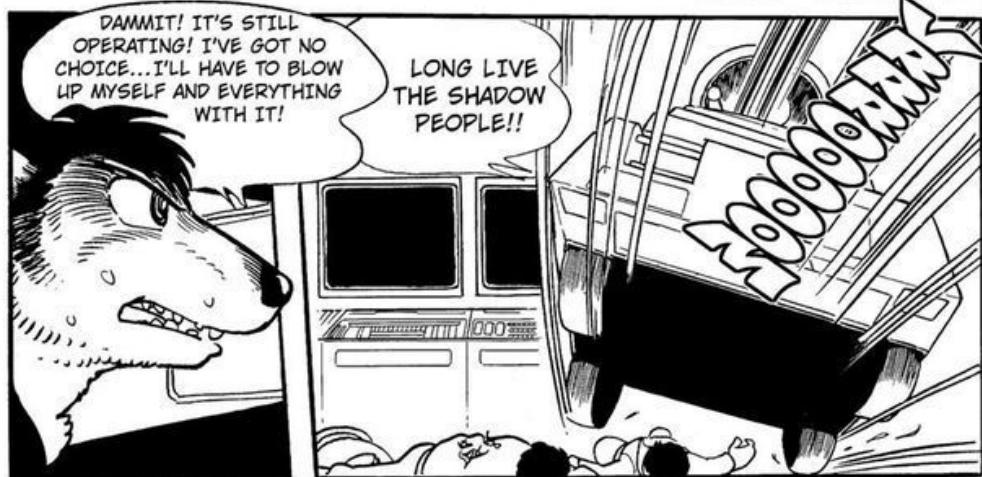
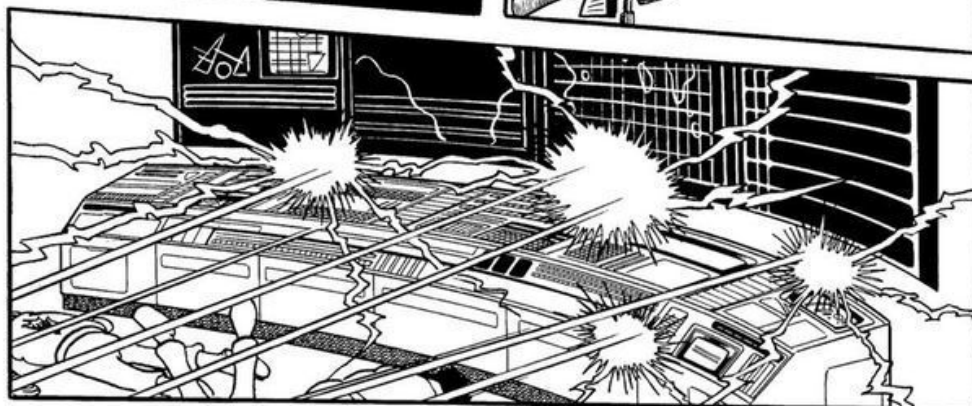


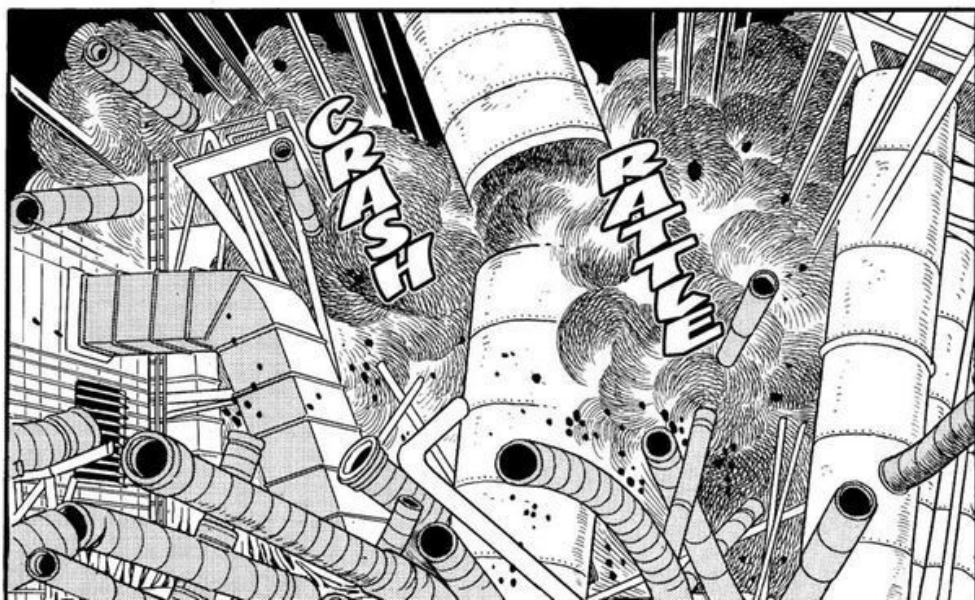


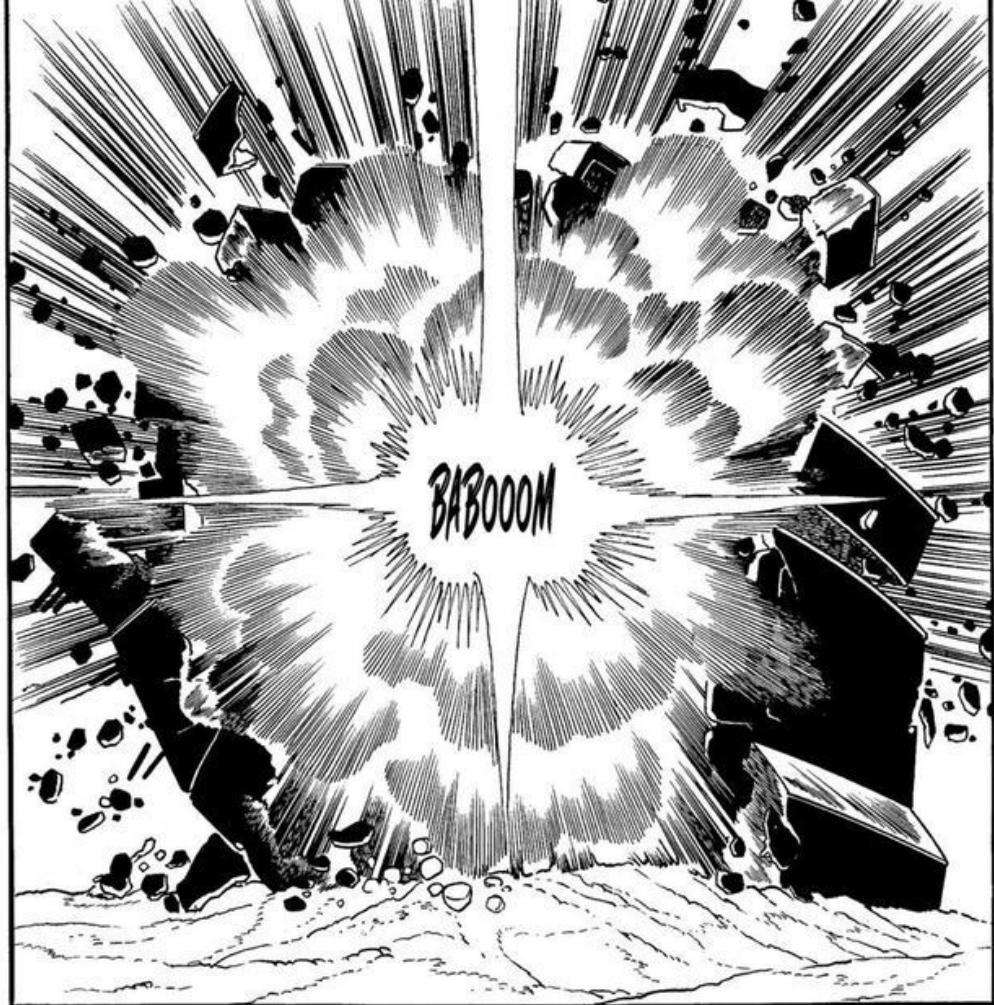




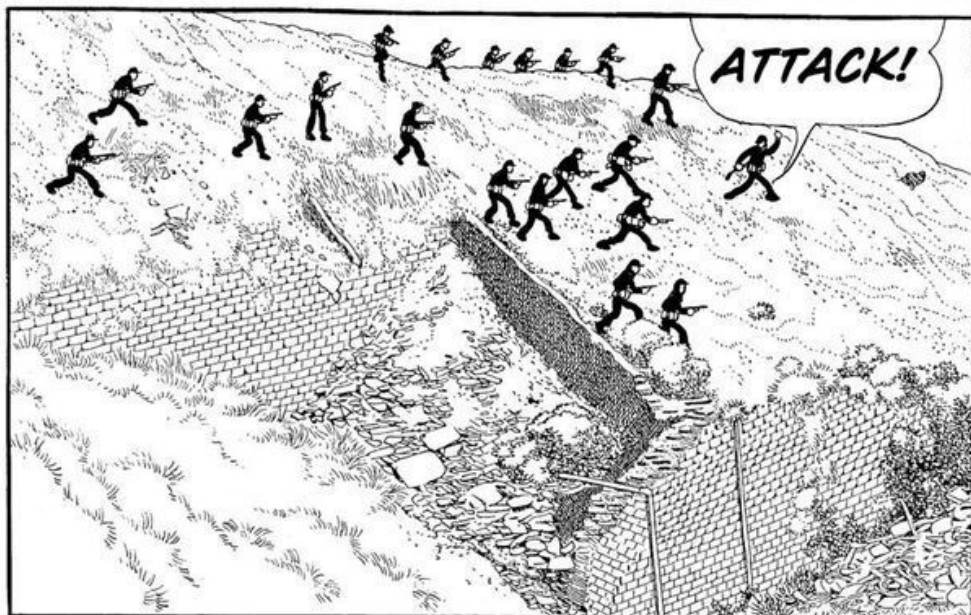
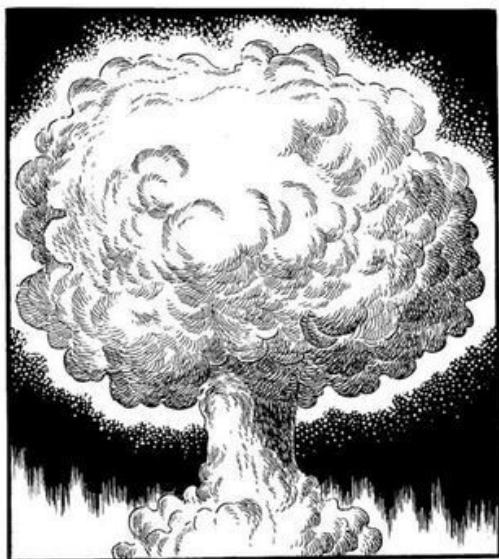










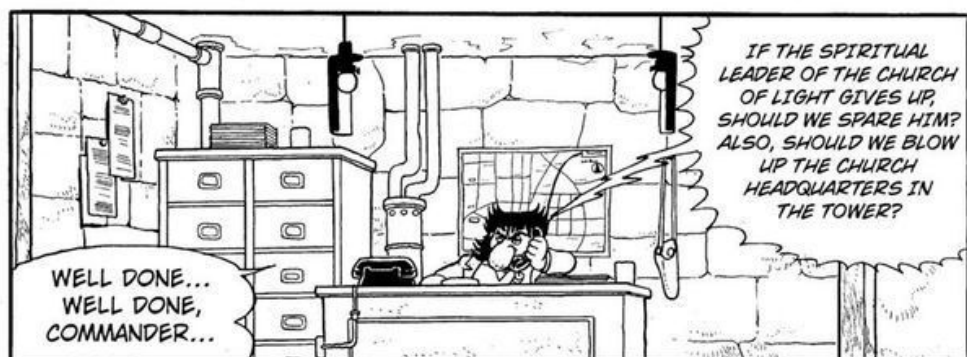




I HEAR YOU
LOUD AND CLEAR,
COMMANDER...
GIVE ME YOUR
REPORT...



GOOD NEWS, SIR.
WE'VE JUST OCCUPIED
THE CITY CENTER! WE'RE
WAITING TO MAKE OUR
FINAL ATTACK ON THE
CHURCH HEADQUARTERS!



WELL DONE...
WELL DONE,
COMMANDER...

IF THE SPIRITUAL
LEADER OF THE CHURCH
OF LIGHT GIVES UP,
SHOULD WE SPARE HIM?
ALSO, SHOULD WE BLOW
UP THE CHURCH
HEADQUARTERS IN
THE TOWER?

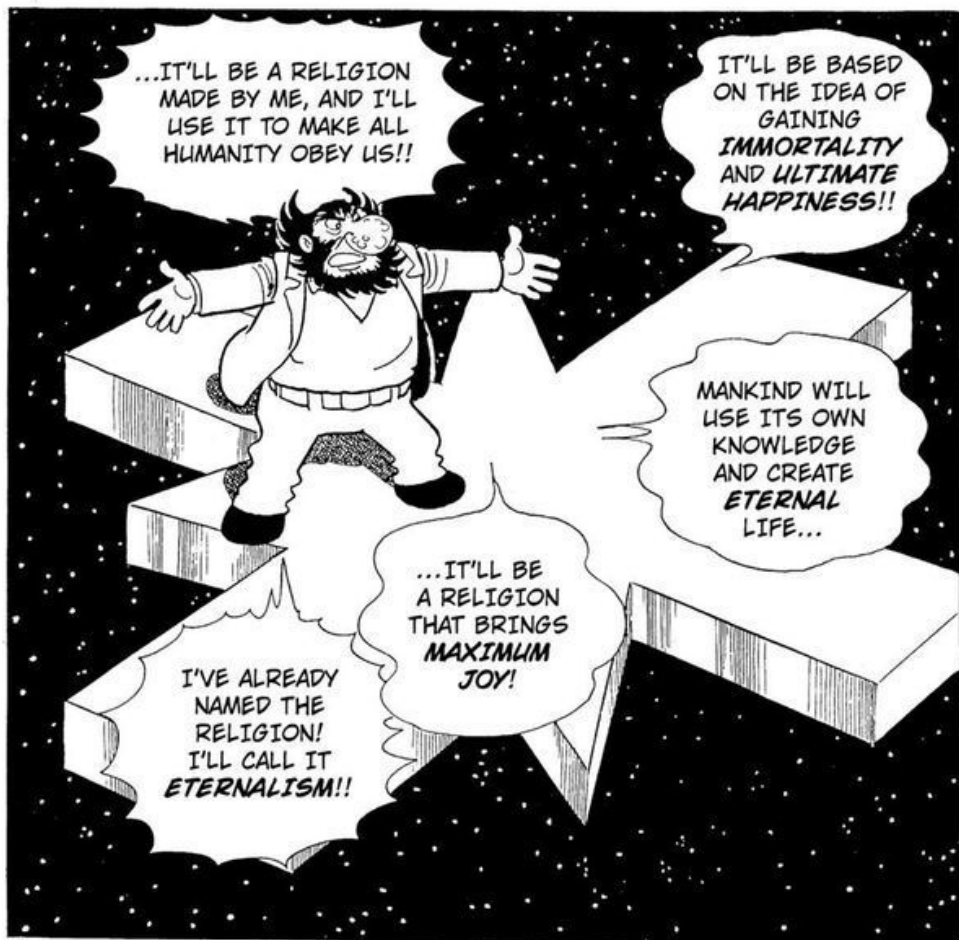


EXECUTE
THE LEADER,
BUT SPARE
THE TOWER...
I'M GOING
TO NEED
IT...

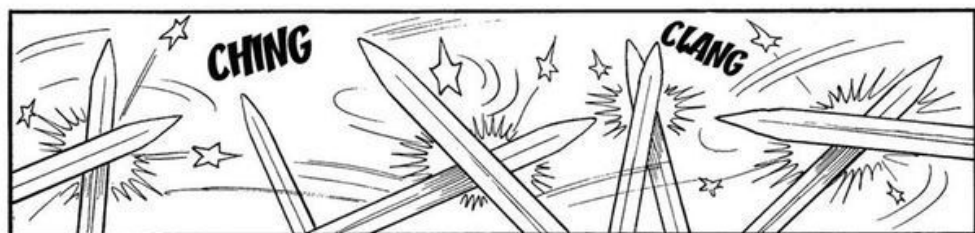


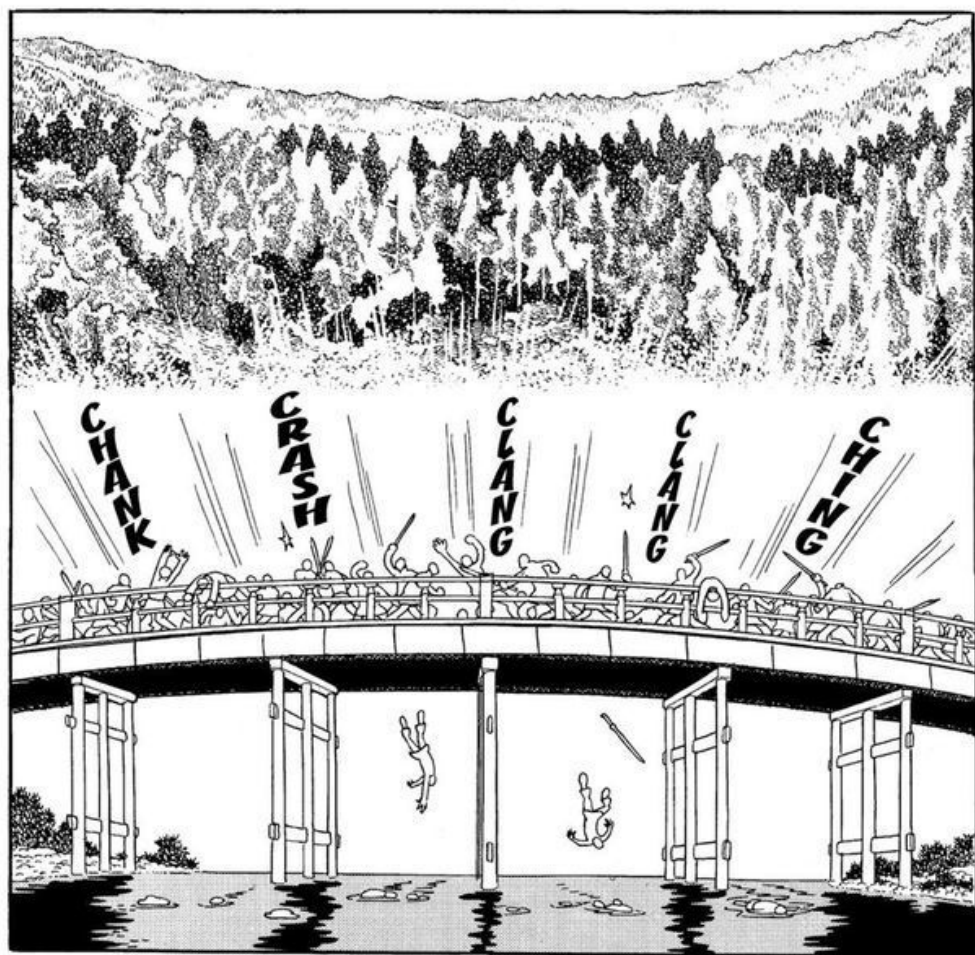
REALLY,
SIR?
WHAT DO
YOU WANT
IT FOR?

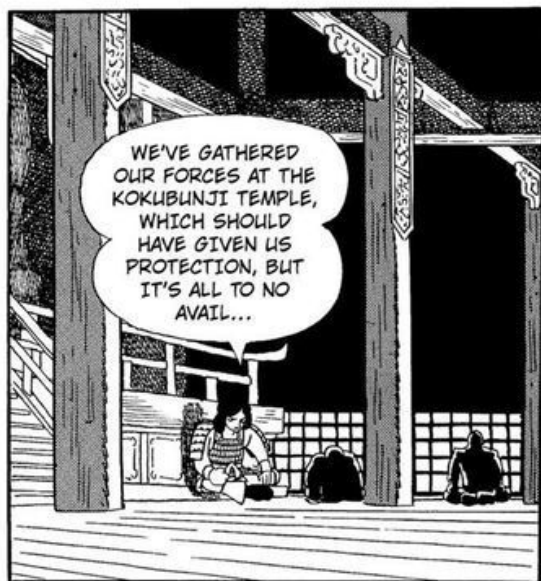
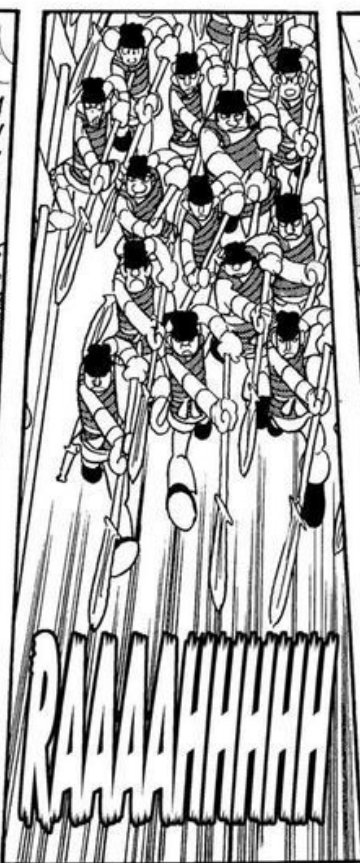
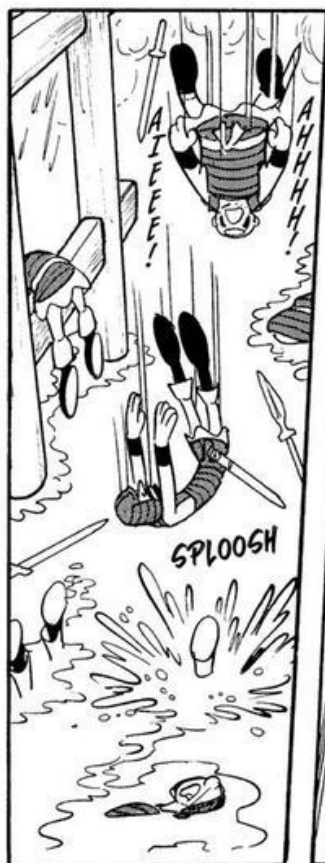
HEH HEH...
THE SHADOW WORLD IS
GOING TO RULE FROM
NOW ON, COMMANDER...
AND WE'LL NEED A
CENTRAL POINT FROM
WHICH TO
RE-EDUCATE THE
POPULACE...

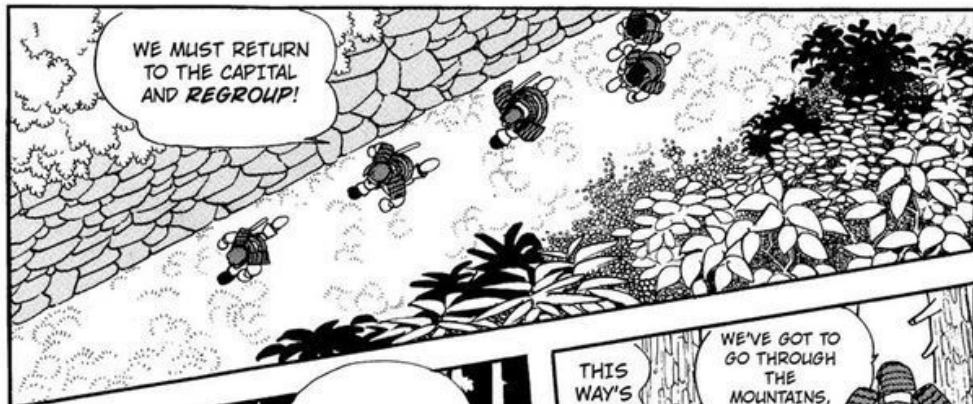
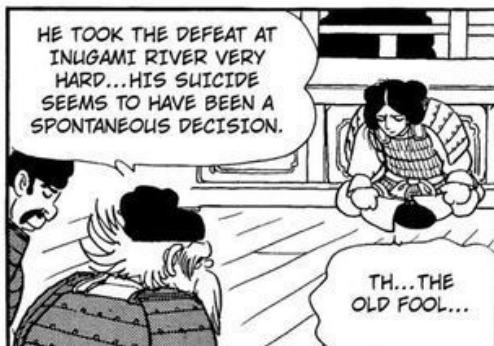








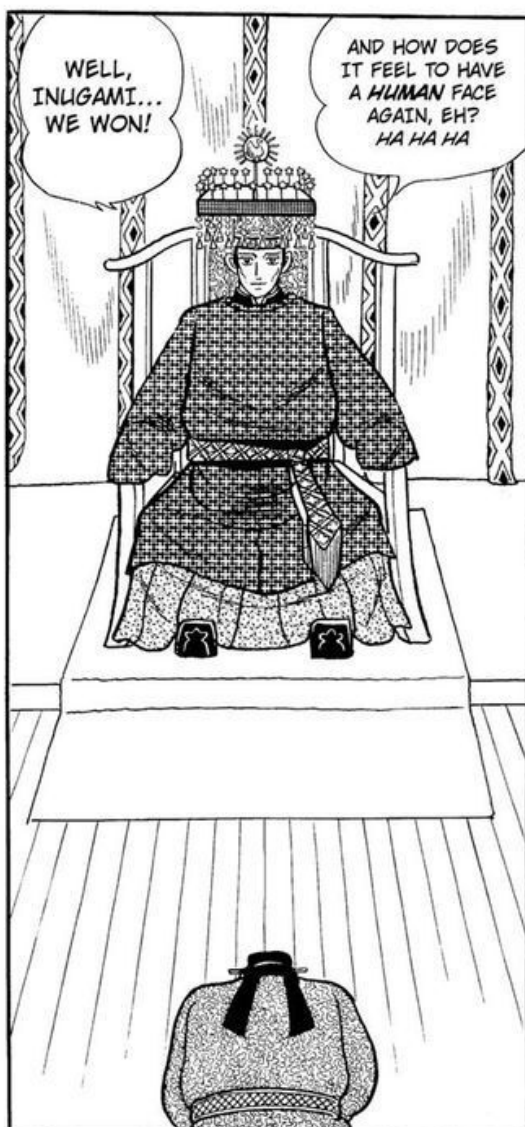
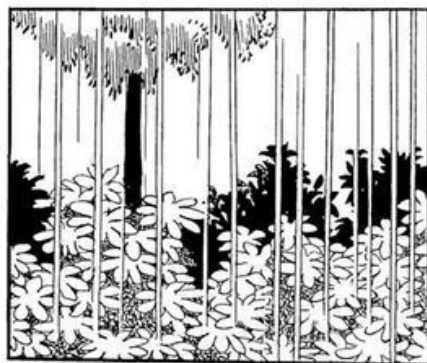
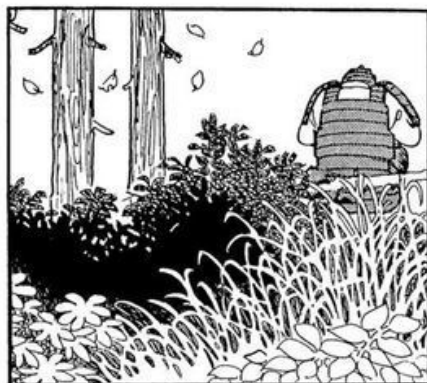


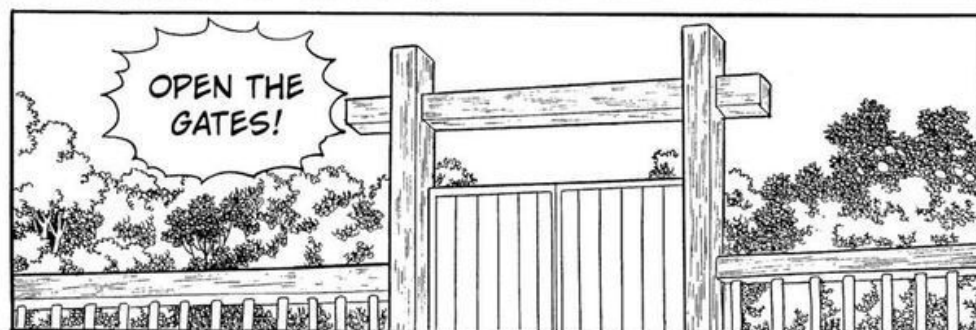
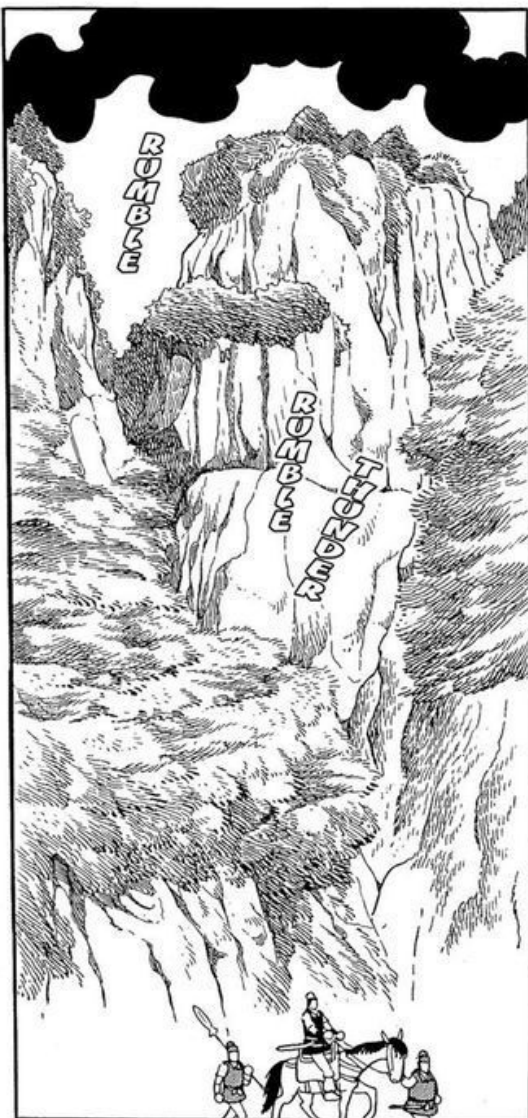
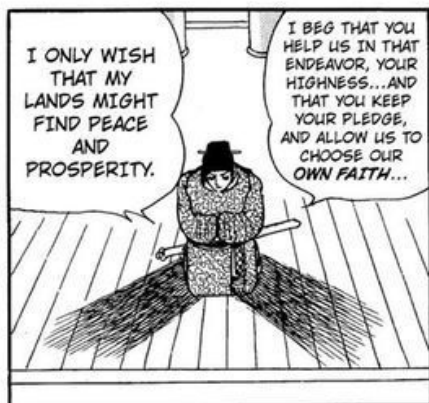


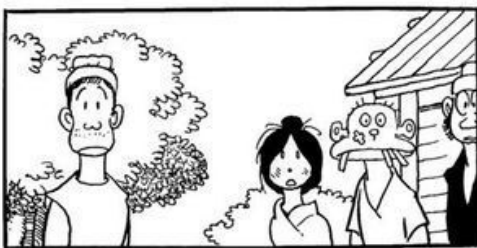




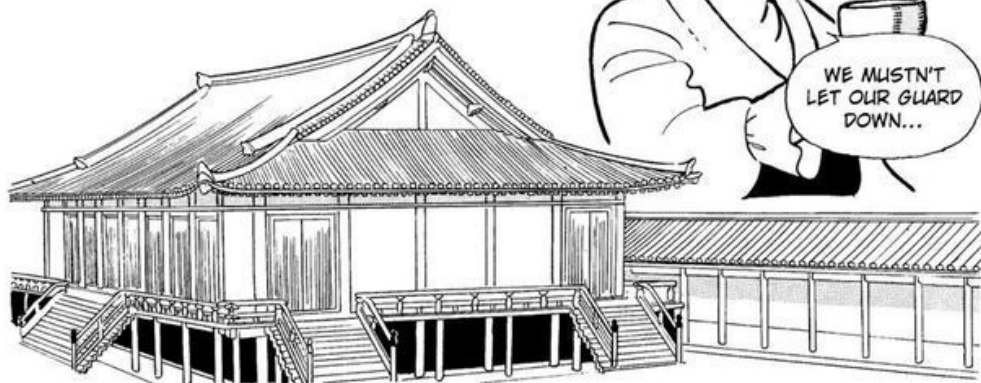


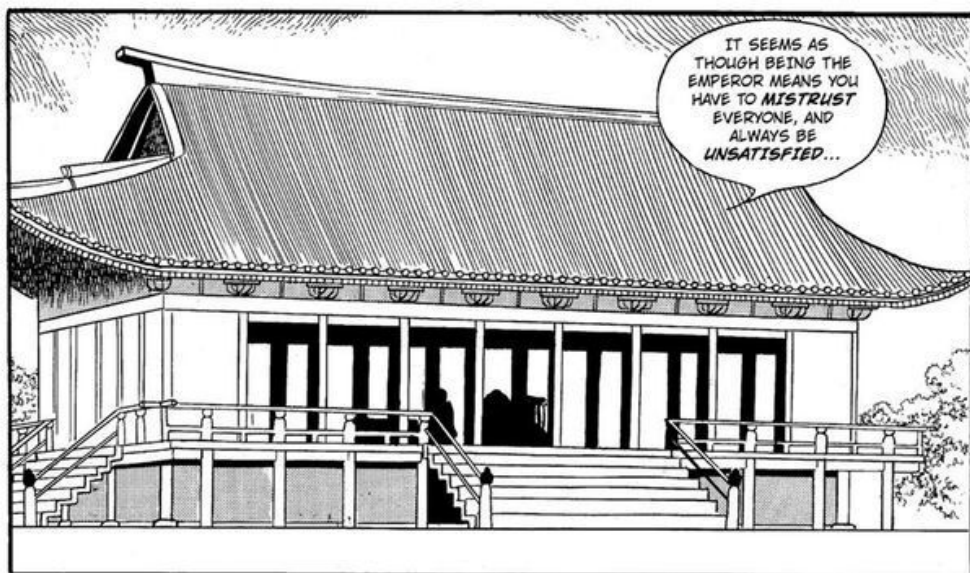










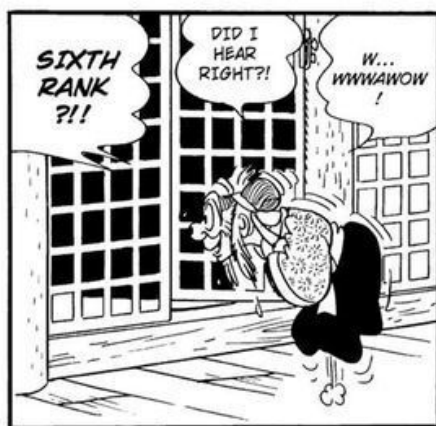


THIS IS
NIPPON, THE
LAND OF THE
RISING SUN!
THE GREATER
EMPIRE OF
JAPAN! AND I
AM THE DIRECT
DESCENDANT
OF THE
SUN GOD!

THE GOD OF THIS LAND
SHALL BE THE SUN GODDESS
AMATERASU—THE GREAT
GODDESS FROM WHOM
ALL LIGHT EMANATES...
AND ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE
LAND SHALL WORSHIP HER!

TO BETRAY ME IS
TO BETRAY
HEAVEN, SO I
HEREBY DECLARE—
ANYONE WHO
REFUSES TO
WORSHIP MY
GOD SHALL BE
TRIED AND
CONVICTED OF
TREASON!

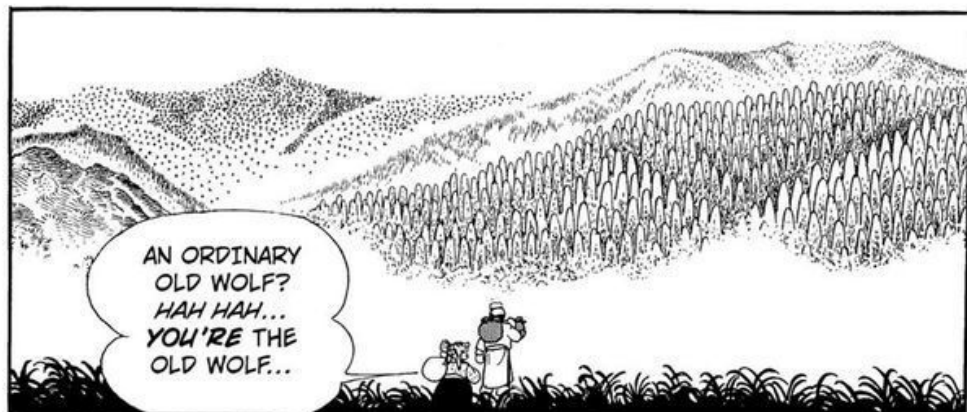
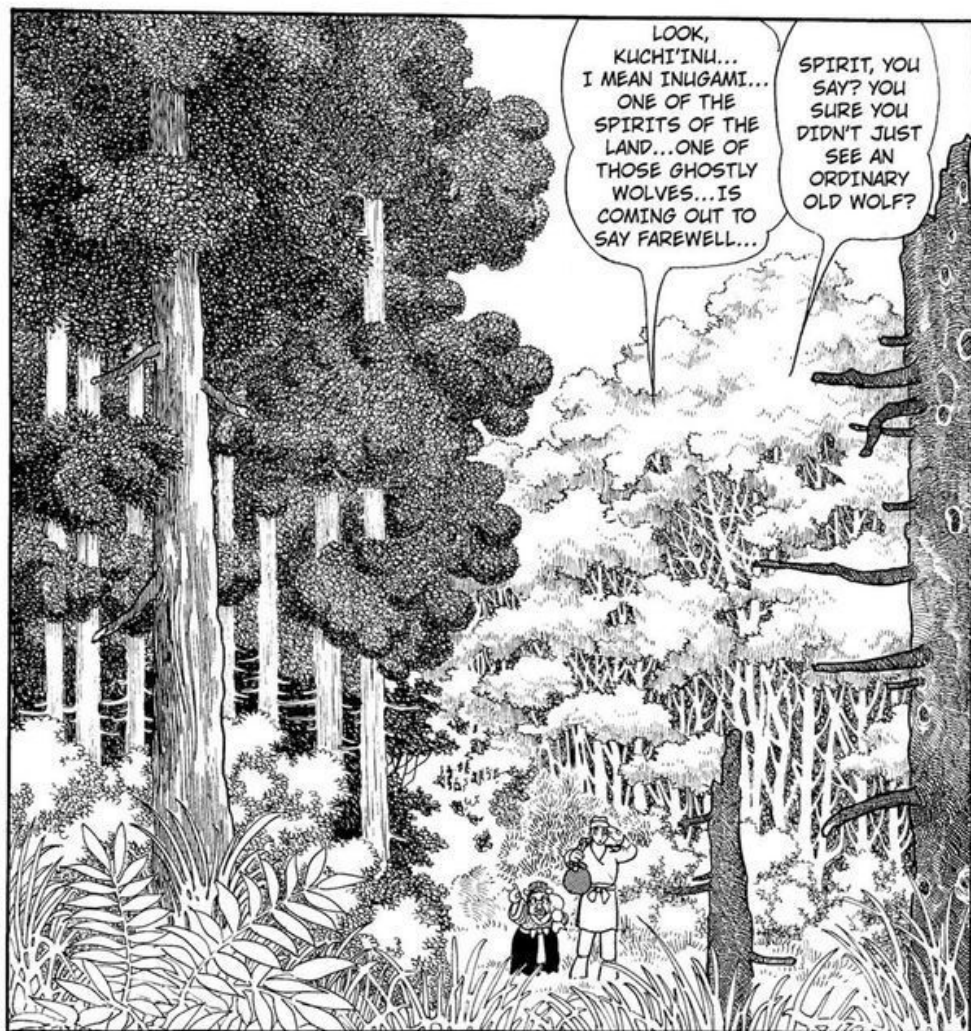


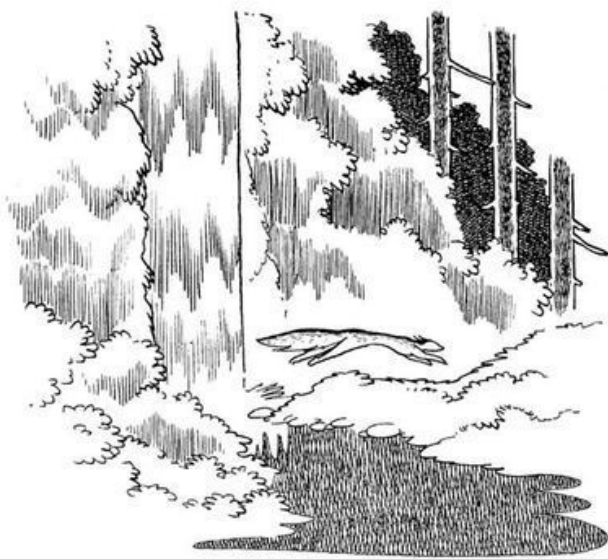
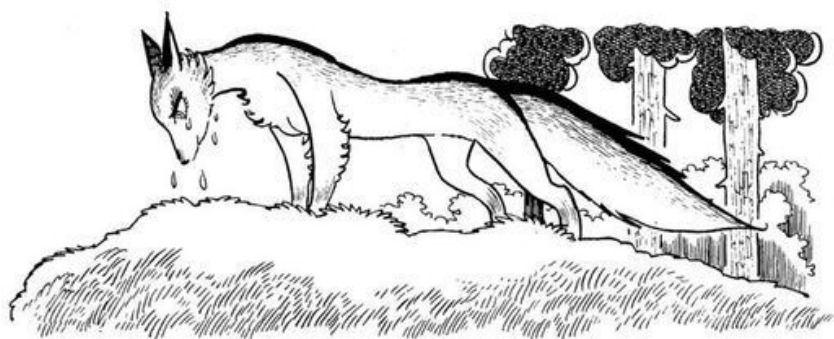
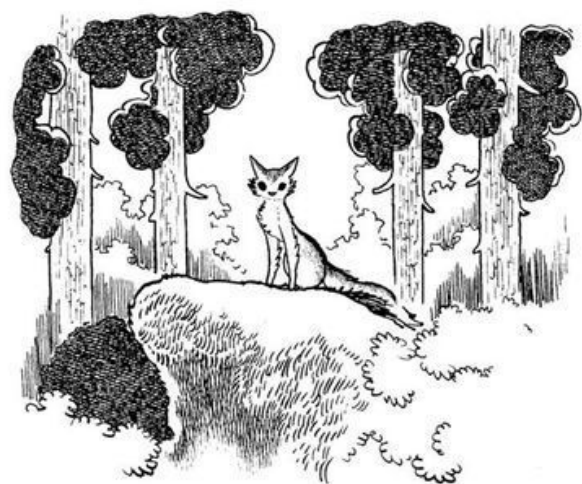


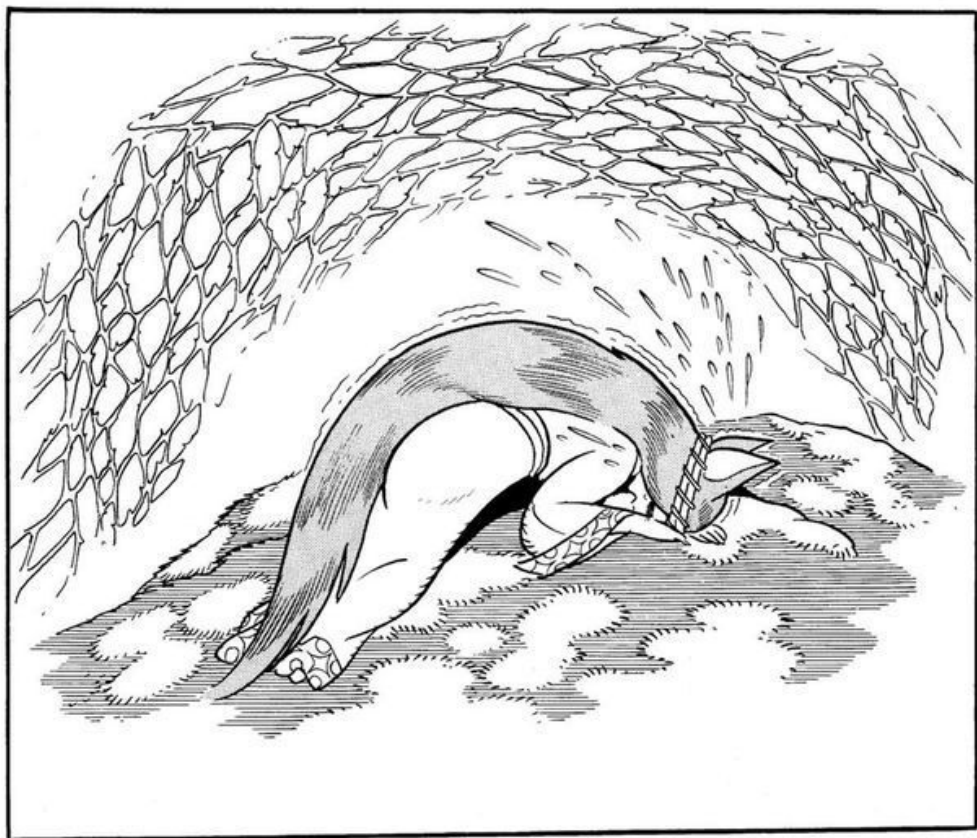










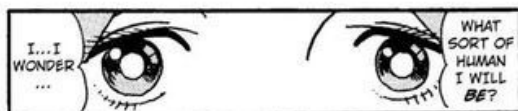


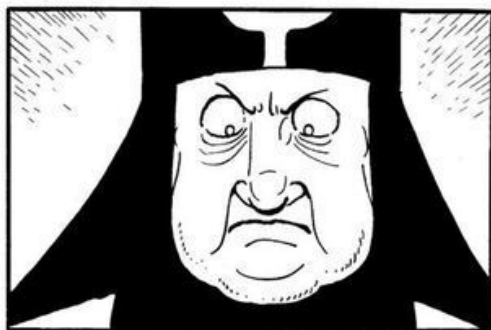
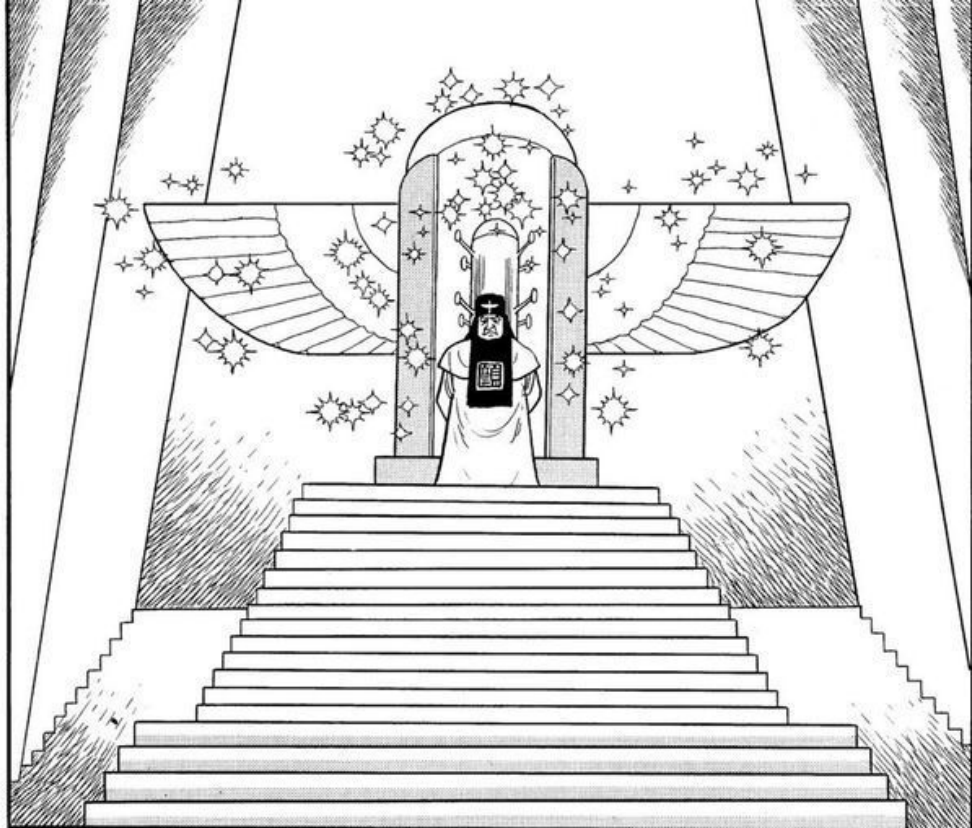
YOU'D BEST
FORGET HIM,
MARIMO. HE'S
CHANGED BACK
TO AN ORDINARY
HUMAN NOW.
HE CAN NO
LONGER BE PART
OF OUR WORLD.

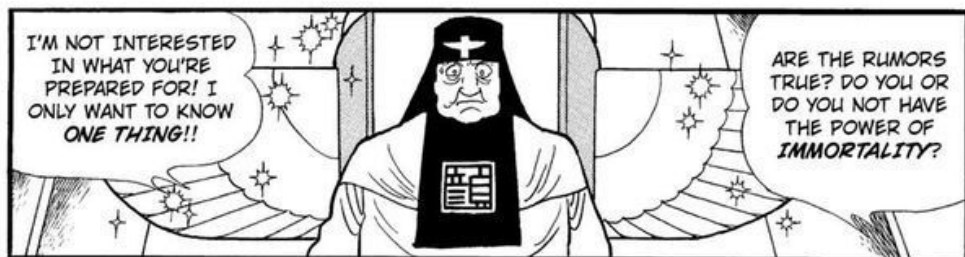
B...BUT
IT'S
SO SAD,
FATHER...
I CAN'T
FORGET
HIM...





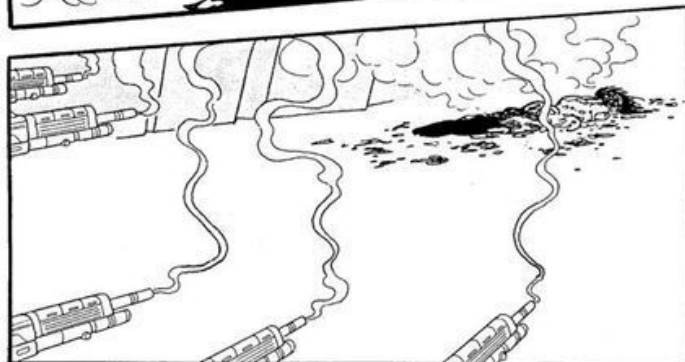
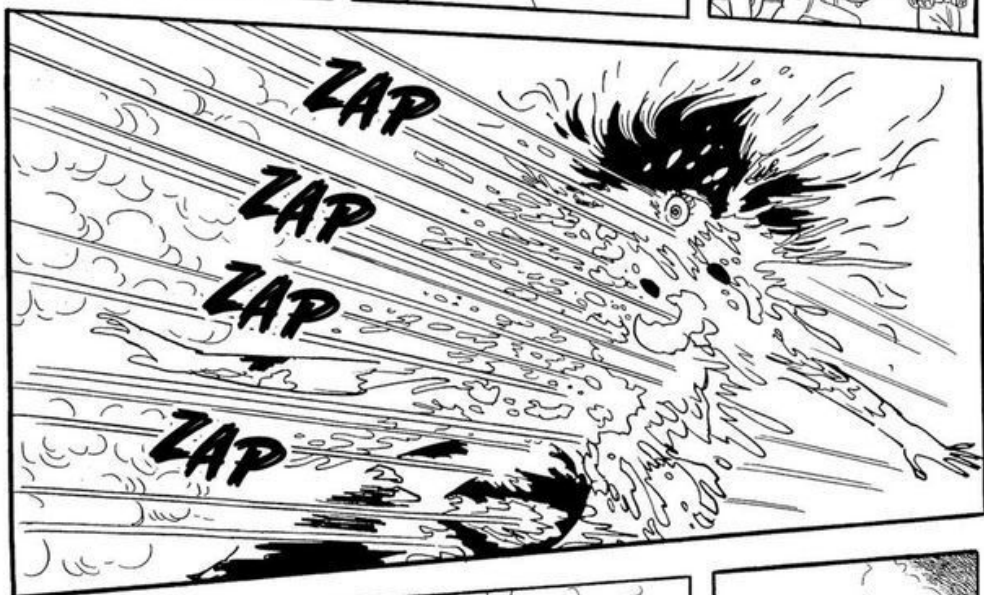




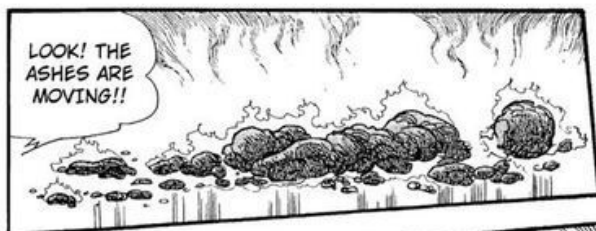
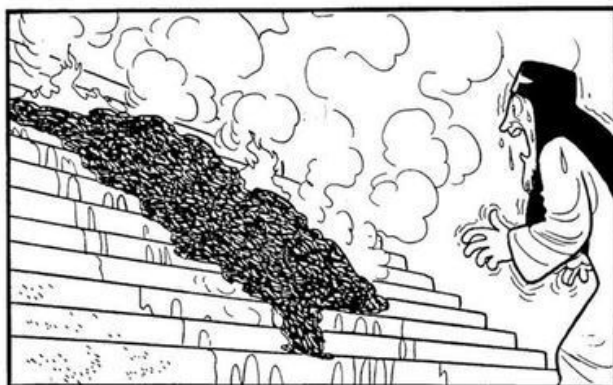




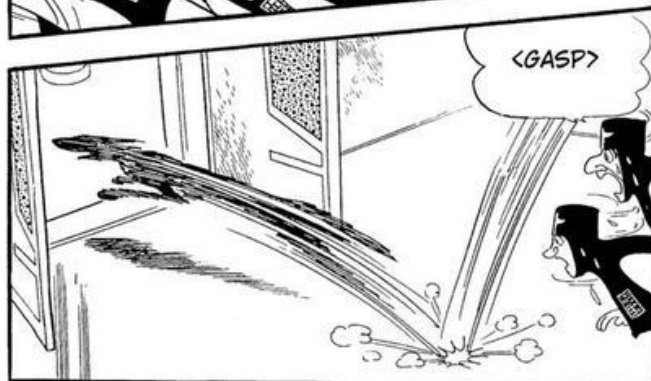
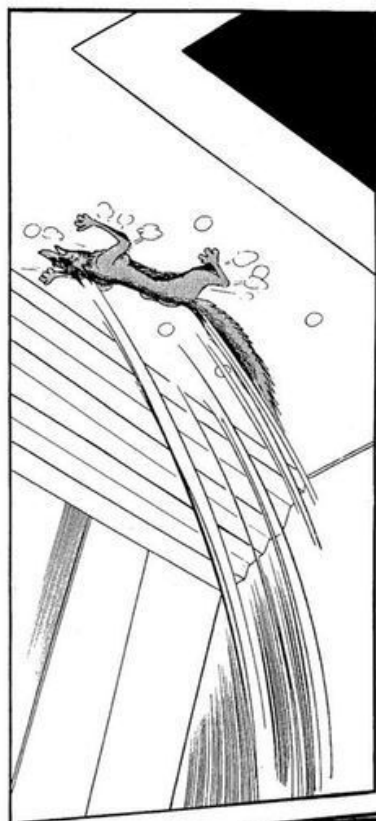




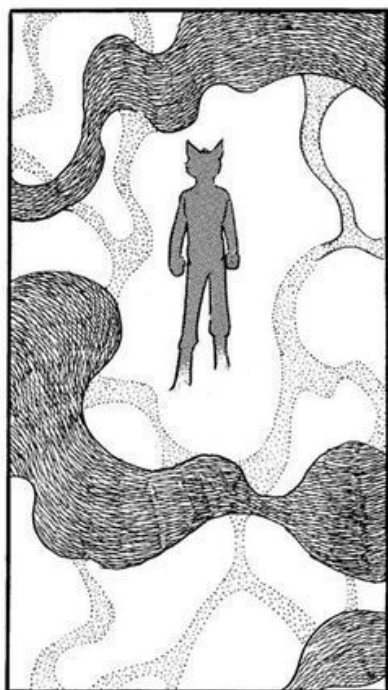






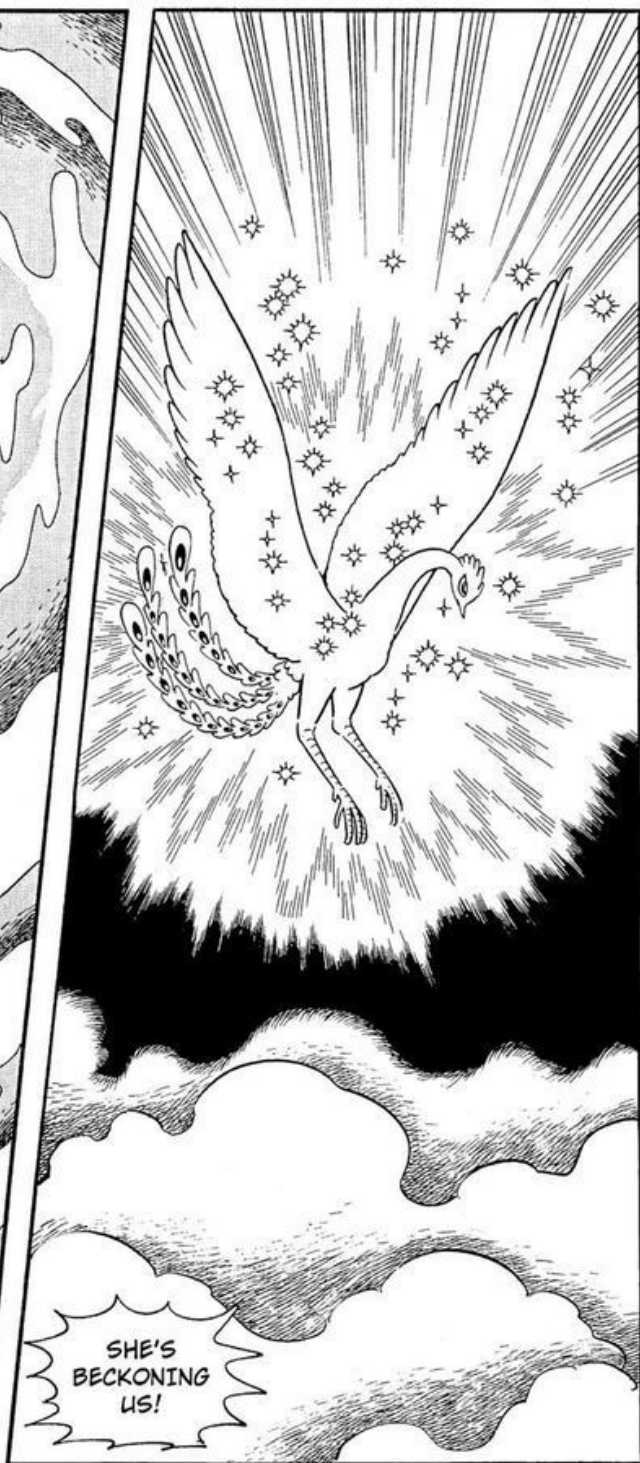


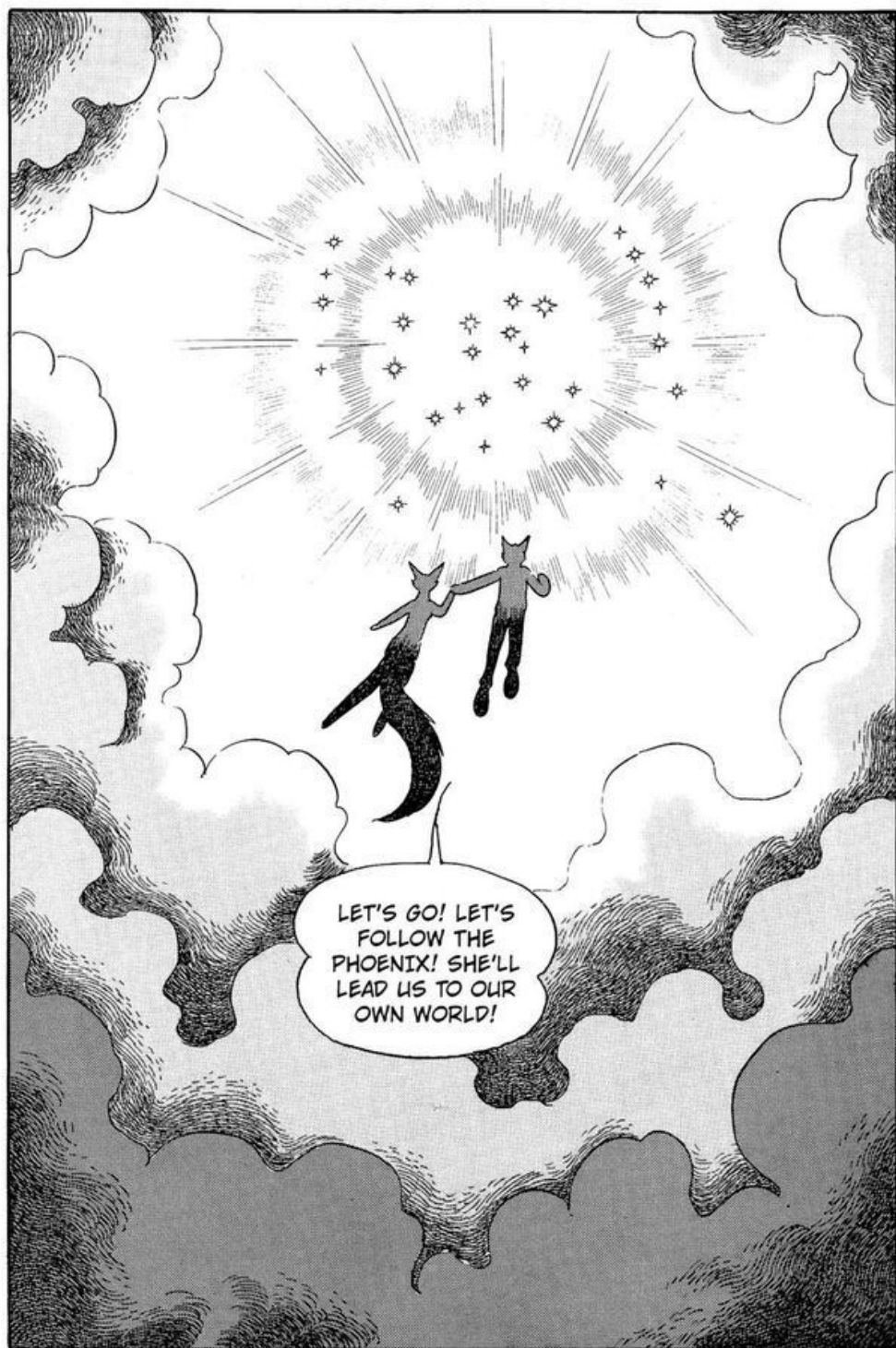












LET'S GO! LET'S
FOLLOW THE
PHOENIX! SHE'LL
LEAD US TO OUR
OWN WORLD!

TO THE
SPIRIT WORLD,
WHERE WE'LL
FINALLY
BE FREE...
FOREVER!



WHAT DID OSAMU TEZUKA INTEND TO CREATE AFTER "SUN"?

Osamu Tezuka passed into eternal sleep on February 9, 1989. And this meant the end of *Phoenix*—a work he had been drawing for decades about the marvel of life, a work that spanned the distant past and the distant future on such a vast scale that it transcended time itself. For fans of the work, it was hard to imagine anything more frustrating than to have this story interrupted, for it had long been assumed that *Phoenix*—which had long oscillated between the past and the future—would ultimately end in the "present."

If Tezuka were still alive, what would he have drawn next, after the *Sun* volumes? He did leave behind a synopsis called *Earth*, originally created as an idea for a *Phoenix* musical, but there are those who are convinced that it was also meant to be another volume in the *Phoenix* manga saga, or perhaps another story altogether.

The *Phoenix* musical was performed on February 8th, 1989 at the Zenrosai Hall in Tokyo. It used Tezuka's animated feature film *Phoenix 2772* (Space Firebird 2772) as a motif, and rearranged it into a drama that Tezuka had set in 1930s China, but Tezuka's *Earth* synopsis itself was never used. Yet it is interesting to note that at this time Tezuka often commented that he wanted to create a story set in China's ancient Silk Road.

Earth is set in Shanghai, during the tumultuous year of 1938, when Japan had defeated the Chinese forces in the war with China. The protagonists of the story are Rokuro Makube, an impeccable and handsome Japanese major, and Professor Saruta, who is on a quest for the legendary Phoenix bird in the vast deserts of western China.

Tragically, we will never be able to read *Earth* as a full volume of the *Phoenix* saga, but the two and a half pages of Tezuka's synopsis are reproduced herein for readers' reference and enjoyment.

Professor Saruta is wandering in a corner of China's vast Taklamakan desert.

January, 1938.

Shanghai is convulsed with news of victory by Japanese forces.

The setting is a party at a very deluxe club on Shanghai's Xian Road, attended by high-ranking officers of the Japanese Imperial Army, members of Japanese *zaibatsu* business syndicates, and couples from a variety of local foreign consulates. People are dancing to the tune of swing and jazz music.

Among the officers at the club is an aide to the Imperial Japanese Army's Kwantung Army Command, a major named Rokuro Makube. An outstanding officer whose future seems assured, Major Makube has been rapidly promoted ever since being united with Rena, the beautiful daughter of Yozo Mita, the chairman of the Mitamura *zaibatsu*.

But Makube and Rena's relationship is strained, as the self-centered Rena starts to look down upon Makube, and Makube finds himself captivated by another, mysterious woman.

In the midst of the lively party at the club, Makube engages in secret discussions with his former teacher, Professor Saruta, who is currently employed by a research center of the Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere Resource Development Agency.

Professor Saruta reveals to Major Makube that in far western China, in the Taklamakan desert, he has found that the phoenix of legend actually exists, near a mysterious "moving lake." The bird's blood contains a special hormone that affects all humans and animals in the area, and gives them an amazing vitality and longevity. Saruta insists that this hormone would greatly enhance the fighting spirit of troops in Japan's Imperial Army.

Generals Mukauchi, and Nori Inuyama, of the Imperial Army's General Staff, then appear and announce that Major Makube has been appointed to head a top-secret expedition to the lake, to capture the Phoenix.

Major Makube is stunned, realizing that if he succeeds in his assigned mission it could make him one of the greatest heroes of the century.

After the other officers leave, Major Nishinomiya—a commander in the *Kenpei* military police force, informs Makube that several members of the Chinese Red Army have been captured out of uniform—and that one of them is apparently a Japanese man who may be related to Makube.

Makube meets with the man behind the dinner club, and it turns out that the man is indeed his own younger brother Masato. He explains to the police that his brother has been arrested by mistake, and Masato is released.

By Osamu Tezuka

To the Reader:

This version of *Phoenix* is a reprint of an edition first published between 1976 and 1981, as part of the *Manga Shonen Bessatsu* (or "supplement volume") series.

A variety of characters from a variety of lands appear in the *Phoenix*, and some people have claimed that they are occasionally depicted in a manner that makes them appear to be barbaric or backward, that they are drawn using outdated stereotypes, or that the depictions are somehow connected to racial discrimination.

We believe that Osamu Tezuka never intended to discriminate against anyone, yet we also are aware that as long as some people feel insulted or demeaned by his drawings, that we must not ignore their feelings. There are those who might advocate revising his work, but we do not believe this would be proper. Tezuka is no longer with us, and we cannot erase what he has done, and to alter his work would only violate his rights as a creator. More important, stopping publication or changing the content of his work would do little to solve the problems of discrimination that exist in the world.

Instead, we hope that when you, the reader, encounter this work, you will keep in mind the differences that existed in attitudes toward discrimination when the work was created and today, and that this will contribute to an even greater awareness of such problems.

Asahi Sonorama and Tezuka Productions

WHAT DOES ETERNAL LIFE REALLY MEAN?

In his masterpiece, The Phoenix, Osamu Tezuka explores the wonders of life on an unprecedented scale, using the metaphor of a "phoenix" that flies between prehistory and the distant future, transcending both time and space.

So why did I choose to write this particular story? In *Phoenix*, many of my stories deal with the belief in the sacredness of life, as symbolized by the firebird. And many stories also portray the complications that arise from our present culture. I wanted to show the conflicts that may have erupted in Japan, when Buddhism—a foreign religion—was first introduced, and people's traditional views of life and death were challenged and forced to change.

Fifty years from now, mankind will no doubt be building space stations and starting to live beyond the confines of Earth. And consequently, there will be a new generation born in space. That generation will be the first to grow up looking down on the Earth from a distance. Until now we have grown up looking at the sun, the moon, and the stars, and our beliefs have developed from this point of view. But any family born and raised on a space station, always looking down on the Earth, is going to have an opposite point of view, seeing the Earth more objectively, and viewing it as one planet among many. So what I am trying to say is, our views of life, as well as what we consider to be common sense, may completely change as a result of this change in perspective. Depending on how we see things, an entirely new set of beliefs may arise.

If these beliefs, developed as the result of a new perspective, should ever find their way back to the Earth and become the beliefs of the twenty-first century, they will no doubt come into conflict with the Earth-bound beliefs we have traditionally held. A new kind of religiosity could result, which could discriminate against the older religions and literally drive them underground.

I have tried to develop a story about this kind of religious conflict and tell it in tandem with the story of the Jinshin rebellion. What I'm really trying to say is, all faiths are ultimately man-made. They do not derive from any fundamental principles of the universe. Rather, they are a product of the constantly renewing culture of the times. And consequently, older beliefs will always come into conflict with an ever-changing culture, giving rise to yet another kind of world. I have tried, in these stories, to describe this constantly repeating process.

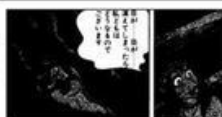
October 1986

A Journey through Time and Space: An Overview of the Complete *Phoenix* Saga

The complete *Phoenix* saga is a story about mankind that features a historical-narrative structure unlike anything that has come before it. The first volume depicts the dawn of civilization. The second volume jumps to the far future. The setting for the third story shifts back to early history, and so on, back and forth, from past to future; the amplitude decreases as past and future converge to meet in the present.

Dawn (1967) 240-270 A.D.

The era of Queen Himiko of the Yamatai Koku. The work quotes from the accounts of the *Gishiwajinden*. Also uses accounts from the legend of *Jinmu Tousei*.



The scene in the Amano Iwato myth where Himiko compares herself to Amaterasu-Omikami and a solar eclipse occurs.

Yamato (1968-69) 320-350 A.D.

Based on the legend of Yamato-takeru-no-mikoto. The dates above were inferred from the account of Old Man Takeru, and from information in *Dawn*.



Disguised as a woman, Prince Yamato Ogunu approaches the Chieftain of the Kumaso and stabs him. As told in the Kiki myth, the prince gets the name "Takeru" from his opponent right before he dies.

Karma (Hou-ou) (1969-70) 720-752 A.D.

The complicated drama of the spirit of two Buddhist sculptors. Set in the Nara Period (710-794) during the national enterprise of the construction of the Great Buddha. Here, the Hou-ou (a Chinese myth) is the Phoenix.



Akanemaru, who has been ordered by the authorities to be in charge of the construction and design of the Great Buddha, is shocked when the statue sheds tears. The workers become frightened, and the bizarre phenomenon halts construction.

Robe of Feathers (1971) 937-941 A.D.



The spirit of a fisherman is bewitched by the beauty of the woman and he hides her clothes...

A sci-fi version of the Hagoromo Legend of Miho no Matsubara in Enshu (modern day Shizuoka). Set during Taira no Masakado's rebellion which occurred during the Heian Period (898-1185).

The spirit of a woman swimming in the ocean is captured by the beauty of the white sand and green pine.

Civil War (1978-80) 1172-1189 A.D.

The time of the Genpei Kassen (War between the Taira and the Genji) after the fall of the Heishi (Taira Clan). Using the *Heike Monogatari* and *Gikeiki* as a backdrop, this story depicts "combat" as the fate of living things.



Kiso Yoshinaka defeats the Heishi and takes control of the capital. He cuts down the famous monk Myoun. He came to the capital because he is after the Phoenix.

Strange Beings (1981) 1468-1498 A.D.

The Sengoku Period (1468-1568). Sakonnosuke, the heir of General Yagi Iemasa, cuts down the nun, Yaobikuni, who seems to be 800 years old. But she doesn't realize the true relationship between herself and the nun.

The banner bearer is saying that "now" is the beginning of the Sengoku Wars and they are in the middle of the Onin Rebellion. In other words, they are in a time before Sakonnosuke was born!



Sun (1986-88) 663-672 A.D.

The story begins after the defeat of the Japan-Kudara alliance at Hakusukinoe and Japan's withdrawal from the Korean peninsula, and ends with the struggle for the imperial throne during the Jinshin Rebellion.



Emperor Kobun, formerly called Otomo no Miko, is the cousin of Takachi no Miko, who is the son of Oama no Miko.

PAST

Future (1967-68)

3404 A.D.-infinity

The end of the future. Mankind is in decline and has become very conservative. The earth is run down and faces devastation. Eventually a nuclear war breaks out causing the end of everything.

The Yamato Central Main Building Megalopolis. Yamato is one of the five remaining underground cities of mankind.



Universe (1969)

2577 A.D.

In Orion, a sub-light speed rocket heading towards Earth crashes into a meteorite. The ship becomes unable to fly and four people manage to escape, including Saruta and Nana.

Each of the passengers escapes in an individual escape pod. However, the pods only have enough food for half a year and enough air for a year and a half. Possibilities of survival are...



Resurrection

(1970-71) 2482-3344 A.D.

In the year 3344, Prof. Saruta lands on the moon. He meets and acquires Robita in his final form. Spanning 860 years, the end of this episode goes beyond *Universe* and close to the beginning of *Future*.

Robita and this rocket also make appearances in *Future*, where Robita stops Rock and then gets shot by him.



Nostalgia (1976-78)

Indeterminate (approx. 25th century)

A Japanese woman named Romy establishes a civilization and history for the formerly uninhabited planet, Eden-17. Her husband dies an unnatural death, but the life she carries inside her...



The spaceship is headed for Eden-17. The shiny object in the foreground is its sun. The planet is surrounded by a revolving ring of space dust held there by gravity.

Life (1980)

2155-2170 A.D.

Human clones are being created, all for high ratings and a public-killing TV game show called *Clone Man Hunt*.

Animal clones were created for food. Human clones are created for a TV show—the cloning company president speaks as a sponsor. A terrifying plan for a TV show!



Sun (1986-88)

2008 A.D.

The "Light Tribe" acquires the Phoenix in space. However, they turn it into an icon and come to control society through religion. Non-believers are called "shadows" and are chased out to live underground.

The head temple of the "Light Tribe." A young shadow boy named Suguru endeavors to climb the great tower and steal the Phoenix.

